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APPOINTMENTS
30-PAGE SECTION

Gap narrows on eve of Wirral by-election
but not enough to rescue the Tories

Labour keeps dominating lead in polls

By Peter Riddell

LABOUR goes into the Wirral South by-election today with the confidence born of its continued commanding opinion poll lead over the Conservatives.

A MORI poll for *The Times* shows support for the party at 52 per cent, down three points since late January, while the Tories have gained one point to 31 per cent. The Liberal Democrats are unchanged at 11 per cent.

The narrowing of the Labour advantage from 25 to 21 points is of little comfort for the Tories, however, since the lead has tended to fluctuate in his range from month to month. Moreover, no party has ever reversed such a big gap in the closing weeks before a general election.

There are now only nine weeks until the probable polling date of May 1; at the same stage before the 1987 contest, the Tories were comfortably in the lead and they were virtually level pegging in 1992.

Tory leaders have largely written off today's by-election as a protest vote. All polls taken in the constituency have pointed to a comfortable Labour victory in the seat which the late Barry Porter held for



the Conservatives with a majority of 8,183. The two MORI polls taken in the constituency during the campaign indicate that 14 per cent of those who voted Tory in 1992 have switched directly to Labour.

Robin Cook, Shadow Foreign Secretary, told a rally last night that a Labour victory would "be a blast that will bring down a tottering Tory Government" and he discounted suggestions that the seat would return to the Conservatives at the general elec-

tion. The Wirral would show Britain the way to the future, he said.

The Tories hope, however, that the rest of the country will have forgotten about Wirral South by May 1. The main positive indicator for the party is that people are more confident about the economy and as optimistic as they were before the party's last three election victories.

The MORI economic optimism index, measuring the number who think that the general economic condition of the country will improve rather than get worse over the next 12 months, now stands at plus two points. That compares with an even balance at the end of January and is the best rating since last August.

But any credit that the Tories are receiving over their running of the economy appears to be offset by the broader "time for a change" mood. The latest poll shows no improvement in the Government's approval rating. More than two-thirds of the public remain dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country, with a fifth satisfied.

John Major's own rating is, however, recovering, particularly among Tory supporters. More than a third of the people questioned are now satisfied with the way he is doing his job as Prime Minister while just under three-fifths are dissatisfied.

Tony Blair's personal rating remains positive with just under a half the public satisfied with the way he is doing his job as Labour leader and a third dissatisfied. Paddy Ashdown has remained more popular than his party. Some 44 per cent are satisfied with the way he is doing his job and 24 per cent are dissatisfied.

MORI interviewed a representative quota sample of 1,940 adults at 174 sampling points across Britain between February 21 and 24. Data were weighted to match the profile of the population.

Back to the future

By Andrew Pierce

LEADING figures from the Thatcher years are being brought back to the frontline to bolster the Conservative general election campaign.

Lord Parkinson, the former party chairman who is recognised as one of the Tories' best communicators, will return to play a prominent role on the television and radio. And Sir Ronald Millar - author of the phrase "You turn if you want to, the Lady's not for turning" - will be a key figure in Mr Major's speechwriting team.

Jonathan Hill, Nicholas True and Michael Dobbs are also being brought back after

a spell away from the political maelstrom. Mr Hill was Mr Major's first political secretary at Downing Street. Mr True an early speechwriter, and Mr Dobbs was Norman Tebbit's chief of staff at Central Office in 1987.

Conservative veterans believe that Mr Major must lay down a strict command structure or face a rerun of the differences that threatened to blight the 1987 campaign.

The Prime Minister will have an office at Central Office where he will be briefed on the newspapers each morning. But he will not attend the strategy meetings chaired by Brian Mawhinney.

Blair to star in the big business breakfast show

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

TONY BLAIR will claim today that Labour is winning the economic argument for the first time in a generation as he addresses the leaders of many of Britain's biggest companies.

In what Labour leaders were suggesting was the clearest sign that business is preparing for a Labour government, Mr Blair and Gordon Brown are to be presented to the chairmen and chief executives at a breakfast hosted by the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

The Shadow Chancellor will announce Labour's intention to publish a special business manifesto in addition to its main election promises. He will promise "stability, sound fiscal management, investment and reform of the welfare state that will help British companies to prosper".

Mr Blair will contend that

Labour is "winning the argument of economic competence with businesses, just as it is winning it with households up and down the land. Businessmen want stability, leadership and fiscal prudence. This Government has ruined its reputation in all three areas. For the first time in a generation, it is Labour that is shaping and winning the economic argument."

The engagement comes the day after another leading businessman expressed strong approval of the Mr Blair approach. Jeremy Har- die, chairman of WH Smith, said that he was impressed by the genuine desire of Mr Blair and other Labour politicians to understand business's genuine concerns.

"Labour has demonstrated a real commitment to learning from business," Mr Hardie said. "It is unhealthy for any democracy if only one party has good relations with the business community and I am glad that has changed."

Leading executives from Barclays, BAT, Unilever, BP, Shell, the Prudential, GKN, Courtaulds, General Electric, Cadbury Schweppes and many other big companies will be at today's gathering. But Michael Heseltine today warns them against choosing Mr Blair as the "chief executive of UK plc".

Writing in *The Times*, the Deputy Prime Minister questions Mr Blair's judgment and claims that he had disowned every principle he held dear ten years ago. "If his old convictions were skin-deep, are his new convictions any deeper?" he asks.

Michael Heseltine, page 18

Curtain up on the new Lloyd-Webber

By Alan Hamilton and Polly Newton

BEWARE the hyphen, for it is a pose and a pretension. Unless, of course, you are a composer of successful West End musicals newly introduced to the cinema.

As of yesterday, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber is Lord Lloyd-Webber of Sydnonton, on the recommendation of Garter King of Arms, the equally hyphenated Peter Gwynn-Jones. The College of Arms explained that the reasons for Lord Lloyd-Webber's freshly-minted punctuation were perfectly logical, if a touch arcane.

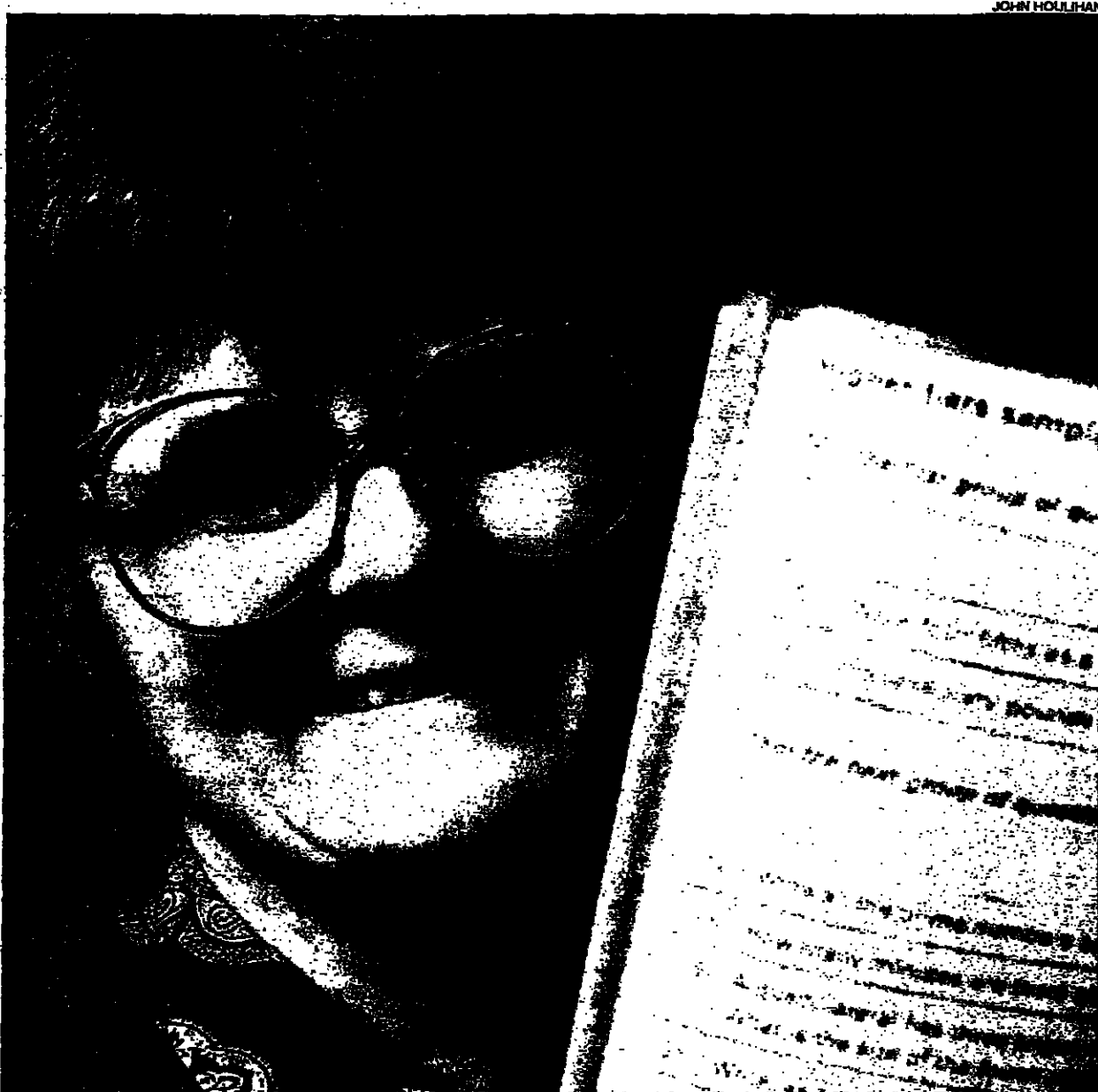
The College explained: "If he were styled Lord Lloyd Webber, he could be mistaken in theory for the son of a peer. Were there an Earl of Webber with a son whose Christian name was Lloyd, he would call himself Lord Lloyd Webber." There is no Earl of Webber, but we shall let that pass.

The rule has been applied

with some severity for many years. David Lloyd George, much against his will, was obliged to insert a hyphen between his given name and surname when elevated to the Upper House in 1945.

Lord Lloyd-Webber was accompanied throughout yesterday's ceremony by cross-bench peers Lord Owen, the former Foreign Secretary and founder of the SDP, and Lord Palumbo, former chairman of the Arts Council. His title comes from his country house at Sydnonton in Hampshire. After a rehearsal, a nervous-looking Lord Lloyd-Webber was welcomed into the Upper House with a routine that included standing up three times from his seat to doff his hat to the Lord Chancellor.

Peers and Asian vote, page 17
Photograph, page 24



Maggie Mash, an announcer for Yorkshire Television, with the text of the mental arithmetic test yesterday

The voice children will dread

By David Charter and Glen Owen

A GENERATION of schoolchildren may come to dread the voice of Maggie Mash, but not for the Yorkshire Television announcer's introduction of the latest episode of *Emmerdale*.

Ms Mash has been chosen to read aloud the first mental arithmetic tests for 11 and 14-year-olds, details of which were announced by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority yesterday.

The country's 24,000 schools are being sent sample questions and a tape of Ms Mash reading the 20-minute test, giving children between five and 15 seconds to work out answers in their heads to 28 questions.

Up to half a million 14-year-olds will hear her voice demanding a response within ten seconds to questions such as: "Write, as a decimal, seven divided by twenty-five."

Ms Mash, a mother-of-three, yesterday came top of a class of politicians, academics and celebrities tested on the

questions for 14-year-olds by *The Times*, even though she gave up mathematics after passing 'O' level in the mid-1960s. She tied, with a score of eight, with Sir Rhodes Boyson, former headmaster and Education Minister.

This may owe something to her narrative technique. Be-

fore she recorded the 20-minute test, she tried to work out all the answers. "You try when you are doing something like that to understand what you are saying."

The continuity announcer, who has worked for Yorkshire Television for eight years, delivers the questions in measured standard English. She said she hoped she would not scare any of the children.

"I hope I sound reassuring, that is what I was trying to be, not frightening or alarming in any way. I was trying to be as approachable as possible," she said.

"It was a bit tricky towards the last two or three. I would have needed an aspirin to do them any faster," Sir Rhodes commented after the test. "This is an extremely good idea. Maths tests are the best way of finding out whether someone is bright or not, and mental arithmetic is as essential as it has ever been. Without the ability to do sums, a child is handicapped for



life," he said. "As a return to old-fashioned methods I give it ten out of ten."

Hot on his heels was Professor Michael Barber, dean of new initiatives at the Institute of Education and chairman of the Labour Party's literacy task force. He scored seven.

"This is an excellent idea," said Professor Barber. "It is

Continued on page 2, col 7

Toughest test, page 4

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BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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And what did you do during the blitz, Ben?

READERS may remember the story of Puss in Boots, in which the Marquis of Carabas, through whose vast estates Puss travels, is spoken of everywhere but never seen. So it is here in the Wirral. Ben Chapman, Labour's contender for the prize of being an MP for three weeks, is as elusive as his party machine is massive.

The Wirral is all bits and pieces, the tatty and the genteel huddled together in the rain. Yesterday, street after street of Union Jack posters in windows and gardens met me. A late surge for the BNP? No, these are the Marquis of Newlabour's posters, boasting of his domain. "Ben Chapman Means



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Business" each declared. But where was the subject of all this excitement? Where was Ben? Mr Chapman (said press releases) would be "blitzing" at Old Chester Road. I arrived too late. The Marquis was blitzing somewhere else.

Where? I asked the Liberal Democrat candidate, pleasant, accessible and secretly disconsolate Flo Clucas. "We can't find him. The Green Alliance invited all candidates to a meeting last night. I went, but he never came."

"Surge in support for Liberal Democrat Flo," said a defiant frown behind her. But it looks like ebb, for Flo. "I'll get you a taxi to the Labour HQ," she said. "They may know where he is."

Labour have taken over a former Iceland superstore for their HQ. In the windows, where frozen fish-fingers and de-boned cod posters were once displayed, photo-panels of Tony Blair, and his pledges, now stand. Within, the whisper of Newspeak replaces the hiss of refriger-

ant gas. There was a desk marked "Reception" and another marked "Enquiries". Behind the shopfront was an operations hall whose scale would do credit to the commodity-broking floor of a secondary European power. But where was the Marquis? "Not here," said Reception. "Ben's canvassing. Out and about," said Enquiries.

Could I join him, out and about? "You've just missed him," said Labour's Barry Jones MP. "Gone for tea." After tea there would apparently be lunch. And that afternoon? "Sorry, no. This afternoon he's preparing for this evening." Ah, Of course. Over at the Poulton Lantelyn primary school, ter-



Ben Chapman: elusive

rified teachers and insouciant tots were awaiting the arrival of Tory minister Roger Freeman, with candidate Les Byram in tow. They stormed

in from the rain, trailing motherly Mrs Byram and her permanently apprehensive smile. "I'm a native of the Wirral!" cried Mr Freeman, a U-certificate David Owen (airline version) with oiled hair and the manner of an ambitious undertaker's assistant. Mr Byram looked genuine, and weary.

"Hello children," he gurgled, in a peek-a-boo way, then (spotting a crayon picture) "that's a bee-yoo-tiful butterfly!" Headmaster Wyn Jones peeped nervously round the door, his busy, happy school invaded by monsters. Overwhelmed by the media excitement, one of the kiddies tried a Nazi salute at the occupying army.

"If you go down to the woods today..." warned a wall poster. "Nice to see you!" gushed Byram, with wolf-like grin. No child dared respond "what big teeth you have, Mr Tory Candidate!" "Anything dangerous for him to be photographed under?" inquired a Tory minder, glancing warily at a coloured-in banana and plum on the wall. "Bye bye children!" trilled the candidate, departing. "That was a very interesting man!" whispered a relieved teacher to her puzzled class. On the table were three bears marked Baby Bear, Mummy Bear and Daddy Bear. Single Parent Bear is under wraps pending the appearance of the Marquis of Newlabour.

Soames refuses to resign over Gulf War report

By MICHAEL EVANS AND VALERIE ELLIOTT

NICHOLAS SOAMES, the Armed Forces Minister, yesterday rejected Labour calls for his resignation after a damning Ministry of Defence report disclosed how his officials had caused him to mislead Parliament over the use of toxic pesticides during the Gulf War.

For more than two years, Parliament was informed that organophosphates were not used to kill disease-carrying bugs and flies in Saudi Arabia, although it later emerged that they were sprayed extensively over British military

units. More than 1,100 veterans of the conflict are claiming that organophosphate poisoning may be behind the so-called Gulf War syndrome. Vaccines given to counter chemical and biological warfare are also being investigated as a possible cause.

Mr Soames had already apologised for unwittingly misleading the Commons and he repeated his apology yesterday before the Commons Defence Select Committee. But David Clark, Shadow Defence Secretary, accused the minister of a "catalogue of compla-

cency" and said he had no alternative "but to resign immediately".

Mr Clark said that the minister had tried to blame civil servants and military staff for his own shortcomings. "At every turn, Nicholas Soames has taken no positive action to investigate the use of organophosphates," he said.

Downing Street sources said that the Prime Minister had every confidence in Mr Soames and dismissed Labour's calls for him to resign. Mr Soames privately said he had no intention of resigning.

The report into how Mr Soames was misled by his officials over the use of organophosphates in the Gulf was compiled by Richard Mottram, Permanent Under-Secretary at the MoD. The report, presented to the select committee yesterday, disclosed that a number of unnamed Forces officers and civil servants faced disciplinary inquiries.

The military personnel could face courts martial. Civil servants could face a disciplinary hearing at the Ministry of Defence as early as next week. Three senior civil servants are expected to assess the culpability of each official. Possible sanctions include dismissal, a formal warning and demotion.

Mr Mottram said the "lead department" being investigated was that of the Surgeon-General. The most senior person responsible for passing incorrect information to the minister's private office was a Service officer of one-star rank, which is a brigadier in the Army. The civil servants involved are understood to be grade seven and grade five officials.

The Surgeon-General at the time of the inquiry, Vice-Admiral Tony Revell, retired last week and has been replaced by Air Vice-Marshal John Baird. Another senior



Nicholas Soames apologising to the Defence Select Committee yesterday

official from the department, a civil servant, is also understood to have retired recently.

Bruce George, Labour MP for Walsall South, asked Mr Soames if the Surgeon-General was "being fitted up" and made into a scapegoat. "The suggestion is outrageous and I resent it," the minister said. The MPs on the committee,

which has been examining the MoD's actions in dealing with allegations of Gulf War syndrome, demanded to know why Mr Soames had taken personal steps to investigate the possibility that organophosphates had been used in the Gulf.

Mr Soames said there had been "no cover-up" but for

some reason the officials involved had not made proper inquiries into the possible use of organophosphates.

Mr Mottram said that during his 28-year civil service career, he could not remember such a serious failure in the system.

Leading article, page 19

Veteran spent more than £5,000 to cure persistent sickness

By MICHAEL HORNELL

A VETERAN of the Gulf War who spent more than £5,000 on pesticide detoxification at a private hospital said yesterday that his treatment had cured him of persistent nausea and helped other symptoms.

As other ex-servicemen with Gulf War syndrome called on the Ministry of Defence to fund treatment at the Breakspear Hospital for Allergy and Environmental Medicine, Ralph Hickley said that until he started treatment

there he thought that he would have to live with his debilitating sickness for life.

Craftsman Hickley, a member of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers attached to the 1st Battalion Royal Scots, served in Iraq and Kuwait for three months. He was regularly sprayed with organophosphate insecticides, given anti-nerve agent tablets and was in the fall-out zone when the Americans bombed Iraqi sarin dumps. Mr Hickley, 31, from Basingsstoke, Hampshire,

said: "The detoxification process is very tiring. But now I am considerably better." Mr Hickley, a self-employed desktop publisher, added: "I went to my general practitioner but I could not get the funding for the treatment. So I approached the hospital myself. One day I hope I shall get back the money from the Ministry of Defence."

The hospital, near Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, has been criticised by the medical establishment for giving "unproven remedies".

Howard drops plans to limit storage of evidence

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL HOWARD last night abandoned proposals that would have allowed police to destroy all evidence and other paperwork relating to criminal investigations three years after conviction.

The Home Secretary climbed down after criticism from lawyers and MPs who said that the Bridgewater Three might never have been freed if the new rules on the storage of evidence had been in effect. Lawyers had also said that it would have made it almost impossible to fight miscarriages of justice, particularly as leading cases have involved documents being studied up to 18 years after trial ended.

Under Mr Howard's revised proposals police must store all evidence for the length of each offender's sentence, so that the papers relating to a person given life imprisonment would be kept until the person was freed or died in jail.

If a non-custodial sentence is imposed, the case papers

must be stored for six months from the date of conviction. In summary cases, they must be stored for one year. Where there is no conviction, the papers must be kept by the police to the end of the court case.

Mr Howard announced his climbdown in a written answer to the House of Lords. He said that at present police forces were not subject to any statutory requirement to retain material for any specified period.

He added: "These provisions are required in the interests of justice. The time limits strike a balance between avoiding increasing the burden on police and the importance of keeping papers as long as necessary."

If an appeal is in process at the end of any of the periods, or an allegation about a miscarriage of justice is being considered by the Criminal Cases Review Commission, the papers must be stored until the end of the appeal or the Commission has reached a

final decision. Mr Howard's move was welcomed by Labour MPs and lawyers who said it was a vital safeguard for offenders.

Anthony Scrivener, QC, said: "I think that this is very satisfactory. I am glad the Government has taken this decision."

Mr Scrivener said that under the original plans most miscarriages of justice cases would never have reached court because all the documents would have been destroyed.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, said he was pleased that the Government had seen sense and amended the rules on preserving evidence. He called for a full Commons debate on the preservation of evidence.

Anglican bishop demands higher rates of tax

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

AN ANGLICAN bishop last night sharply criticised the Conservatives and Labour for promising to cut taxes.

The Right Rev Michael Bourke, Bishop of Wolverhampton, said he would be prepared to pay an extra 5p in the pound to see improvements in health, education and transport. He called for politicians to "face the facts" about the need for higher taxes to fund better services, and said that most people he knew were willing to pay an extra 1p or 2p in the pound to see services improved.

Bishop Bourke, an area bishop in the Lichfield diocese who earns £20,000 and whose wife is a nurse, admitted that he could easily afford to pay higher taxes. The couple's two children have grown up and left home. But, he added, he had held the same view when he was a poorly-paid curate in

the 1960s. "When I was a child our family was hard up. When I became an adult and entered into the unimaginable riches of £688 a year I did not begrudge paying tax at all. I had the best standard of living I had ever had."

"I am against those who are comfortably off saying that the sacrifices have to be made by those who are worse off than they are."

"It is not a party-political point I am making. It is against both parties. I am not a Lib Dem but the Lib Dems have at least had the honesty to say they will put up taxes to pay for better education."



Bishop Bourke wants more public spending

crazy compared with other countries that spend more on their transport systems. Of course I can afford to pay higher taxes but those who are lucky enough to pay tax who are, by definition, because they are the haves in society."

Arithmetic

Continued from page 1
very important for children to have a good grasp of mental arithmetic. At the moment, it all depends on the teacher and the school.

Jilly Cooper, the novelist, called herself "a geriatric genius" after notching up six but was unimpressed by the idea. "This is crazy. Young people have enough distractions as it is in exams without having to worry about tapes. Poor, wretched mothers will now have to go around pretending to be BBC announcers," she said.

Other potential examinees were less forthcoming. Sheila Lawlor, director of the right-wing think-tank Policya and an enthusiastic supporter of traditional paper and pencil tests, requested a fax of the questions to mail over. "I need time to think about things like that," she said.

Journalists collecting the sample questions yesterday found themselves, with no prior preparation, listening to Ms Mash. The Times and The Express scored ten out of ten. The Guardian achieved nine points and The Independent five. The Daily Telegraph failed to attend and was as the regulations for schools require, awarded nil.

Assisted places at schools allocated

The first 40 preparatory schools to benefit from the Government's extension of the Assisted Places Scheme were named yesterday. Cheryl Gillan, the Education Minister, announced that children as young as five from low-income families would benefit from the scheme in September. The Education Bill will allow free-standing preparatory schools to participate for the first time, as long as it becomes law before the general election.

The 203 schools awarded places yesterday include 78 preparatory schools attached to senior schools.

School approved

Plans to build a new grammar school in Milton Keynes were given final approval by Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary. But the decision is still subject to the outcome of a judicial review on the project, granted to the unitary authority for Milton Keynes, and a planning inquiry.

Hockey jailing

Peter Morris, 21, an amateur hockey player, was jailed for 28 days by Teesside magistrates yesterday for attacking Terence Rutley, 52, an umpire, with his stick and breaking his arm after being sent off during a match. Morris, who was playing for the chemical plant team ICI Wilton, pleaded guilty to actual bodily harm.

Grand Prix sale

Graham Hill's racing helmet and visor from 1974 fetched £18,400 at a sale of Formula 1 memorabilia at Sotheby's in London yesterday. The helmet worn by his son Damon in the 1993 season fetched £16,100. The racing suit worn by the late Ayrton Senna during his 1985 season with Lotus fetched £17,250.

Cancer bone link

Postmenopausal women with strong bones are over three times more likely to develop breast cancer than those with lighter skeletons, researchers at the University of Boston School of Medicine have found. Their research into bone density could provide doctors with a new screening test for the disease.

Women in lead

Women are better drivers than men in theory — but not in practice, new statistics show. The Driving Standards Agency said that in the first six months of the new theory test for learner drivers, women had a higher pass rate than men, but men had a higher pass rate in driving tests taken in 1995-96.

Top terminus

A clean-up operation has helped King's Cross in London to become rail station of the year. After a joint exercise by the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police and local councils, "King's Cross is once again a terminus worthy of the capital," Lord Mountevans, chairman of the judging panel, said.

First laugh

A boy aged six whose genetic disorder made him cry when he wanted to giggle has laughed for the first time, after being treated at the Brain Injury Rehabilitation and Development Centre, Chester. Tyler Balam, of Wolverhampton, was born with a chromosomal abnormality preventing his brain sending the right messages.

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DISCOVERY

McDonald's beefs at sales crisis on the home front

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

ONE of 20th-century America's most potent cultural forces, the Big Mac hamburger, looks to be in trouble. Amid reports of an unexpected slump in US sales, the McDonald's Corporation of Oak Brook, Illinois, has begged distributors to slash prices to defend its future.

Jack Greenberg, head of the company's US restaurants, made an urgent plea to franchisees to drop the price of a Big Mac from \$1.90 to 55 cents and to give free burgers to customers who did not receive brisk service. Many franchise holders are expected to

refuse, as it will mean substantial cuts in their revenue.

The dramatic strategy, which could wreck profits and lead to a price war at America's fast-food counters, may decide not only the future of a company that was once regarded as the unstoppable — albeit hard to swallow — face of the future. At issue may be the future of the traditional American burger itself.

A recent rise in chicken sandwiches and tacos, plus the rejuvenation of Burger King under British ownership, has challenged McDonald's domination of the



Smaller share for Big Mac prices could be cut drastically

market. Since the Seventies it has been the undisputed leader in the US fast-food world.

However, in an internal memorandum, McDonald's executives

were given warning of a "declining momentum of sales, transaction and cash flow". This was followed by a series of exhortations such as "Breakfast decline must be stopped now! Competitors are growing faster and stealing share!"

The Wall Street Journal described on its front page a "sense of urgency" among executives when they realised that there had been a "chronic decline" in McDonald's outlets around the US. "The troubles at McDonald's Corp are deeper than most analysts or franchisees know," said the paper, which is not known for overstatement.

McDonald's operates 15,000 sites

around the world, 12,200 of which are in America. Its international outlets are not in trouble: the company recently unveiled a major investment in new restaurants in Britain and earlier this week announced its first burger bar in Ukraine. But at home the problems are serious. Susan Olson, a Chicago-based food trends analyst, said yesterday that the US fast-food market had reached saturation point. "The real boom area of the market in the US is in what we call home-meal replacement," she said. "People are increasingly going to restaurants that will serve them an entire meal that they can take away and serve at

home — dishes such as rotisserie chicken with side dishes. Customers seem to like them because they taste like the food that grandma used to make 30 years ago."

Increasing numbers of Americans are forgetting how to cook: a recent survey suggested that only 50 per cent of households sit down to more than one dish of home-prepared food a day.

McDonald's was not helped by the introduction last year of the Arch-DeLuxe burger, which was bulkier, "more adult" and more expensive. Although the company insists that the new burger has done all right, other sources say that it was a disaster and harmed

the company's reputation for offering a budget bite. McDonald's may have made the classic mistake of tampering with a winning design, just as Coca-Cola nearly damaged itself a few years ago when it tried to alter its traditional formula.

Despite all the gloom-mongering, however, Ms Olson said that it might be a mistake to predict the demise of McDonald's. "The reason McDonald's has been so successful in the past is that it takes everything so seriously," she said.

A spokesman for McDonald's in Britain said last night, "We don't know anything about this. It is entirely a US issue, completely separate to British operations."

Lords clear way for Moynihan's return to politics

BY ANDREW PIERCE

The former Conservative MP Colin Moynihan claimed victory over the six-year-old son of a Filipino bellydancer yesterday in the legal battle to succeed the third Lord Moynihan, the peer who financed his colourful lifestyle with a string of massage parlours in Manila.

The House of Lords Privileges Committee untangled the exotic legacy of the late third baron yesterday and paved the way for the diminutive former sports minister and Olympic rowing medalist to resume his political career in the House of Lords.

Mr Moynihan lost his Lewisham East seat in the 1992 general election. The committee approved Mr Moynihan's claim to the title, with its multi-million pound estate in the Philippines where the late Lord Moynihan spent the last 15 years of his life as a fugitive from British justice.

The rival challenge from his nephew, Daniel, the son of Jinna, the late peer's fifth and last wife, was ruled "not to have succeeded". Jinna met Lord Moynihan when she worked in one of his Manila massage parlours.

The ruling, which will allow the former MP to enter the Lords as the fourth Baron Moynihan, is subject to confirmation by the full House of Lords and the Queen, although that is thought to be a formality.



Lord Moynihan and the family coat of arms



Mr Moynihan, 41, said last night, "I am delighted. Five years of hard work have gone into presenting a comprehensive petition. I am very glad

that this long process is now over. I now look forward to taking my seat in the House of Lords and having the honour fully to participate in its activities. I am very pleased and relieved."

Mr Moynihan intends to try to restore the good name of the Moynihan family, which has been damaged by the exploits of his flamboyant late half-brother.

"Regrettably there were many unhappy chapters in Tony Moynihan's life. I believe that, hopefully, this will close some of the unanswered questions," he said.

The third potential successor to the title was Andrew, 7, the son of Editha, his fourth wife. But DNA tests showed that he was not his son.

The late peer's fifth marriage to Jinna, of which Daniel was the only child, was proved to be bigamous, making Mr Moynihan the only legitimate heir.

The Queen had referred Mr Moynihan's petition for a writ of summons to the House of Lords to advise her because a hereditary title was at stake. Lord Boston of Faversham, QC, the chairman of the committee of four law lords and 16 senior peers, said: "I would like to congratulate Mr Moynihan on his conduct of his case in person, which I would venture to suggest, as a fellow member of the Bar with



Colin Moynihan arrives with his wife at the High Court in London last year for the hearing against Jinna Moynihan and her son, Daniel

Mr Attorney General, would have been the envy of many of us who are members of the Bar."

Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, had advised peers that Mr Moynihan's claim to the title was legally sound.

Lord Moynihan, who died in 1991, was educated at Stowe and was a former officer in the Coldstream Guards. He was referred to at an Old Bailey trial in 1971 as "the evil genius" behind a series of West End

frauds. At the time he had already left the country and a warrant was issued for his arrest, but he never returned to Britain.

Anthony Patrick Andrew Cairnes Berkeley Moynihan, the third Baron Moynihan of Leeds, inherited the family fortune in 1965.

He took his hereditary seat in the Lords with the warning: "I have every intention of shaking this place up. The sparks will fly."

But it was Lord Moynihan,

darling of the gossip columnists, who fled on the advice of his solicitor in 1968 to avoid arrest for tax evasion. In 1971 he was traced to Manila, but Britain did not have an extradition treaty with the Philippines.

"For many centuries it has been the practice in cases of some difficulty first to refer them to the Attorney-General," he explained. Sir Nicholas added: "It is essential that no one be admitted to the House of

Lords who is not properly qualified to sit." The barony was created in 1929, for the leading surgeon Sir Berkeley Moynihan. Sir Nicholas said: "The problem begins to arise as a result of the marriages of the third Baron, who lived a very colourful life — some of the colours distinctly lurid. He married five times — or at least he went through five ceremonies of marriage."

The High Court's family division had ruled last year that the 3rd Baron's divorce

from his fourth wife, Editha Eduarda, had been obtained by fraud. This meant that the peer's fifth marriage, to Jinna Sabaga, had been bigamous. Sir Nicholas said: "There is no reason to think that Jinna didn't think she was going through a genuine ceremony of marriage."

Daniel had been born three weeks after Lord Moynihan's "marriage" to Jinna. He added: "The consequence of it being a bigamous marriage is that Daniel is illegitimate."

MP five times over limit at his death

BY ADRIAN LEE

IAIN MILLS, the Conservative MP for Meriden, drank himself to death, an inquest was told yesterday.

Dr Paul Knapman, the Westminster coroner, said that when Mr Mills's body was found by a colleague, the level of intoxication was "astoundingly high": he was five times above the legal limit for driving. A bag containing several empty gin bottles was found at his side in his flat in Dolphin Square, Finsbury, near the House of Commons.

Derek Conway, MP, a senior Conservative whip, told the inquest that he became concerned after Mr Mills missed an important vote in the Commons. Two days later he went to Mr Mills's flat, where a window was open. "I was able to push the curtains inside and saw Iain's body."

The inquest was told that Mr Mills underwent an operation for cancer of the colon in 1991 and also had a benign neurological condition. He had a tremor and poor balance. In a statement, Dr Robin Howard, a consultant neurologist, said his condition was "exacerbated in times of



Mills had been treated for cancer

stress and eased by alcohol". A three-quarters-full bottle of pain-killers found on a table were for toothache and were not significant.

Dr Peter Jerreat, a Home Office pathologist, said the enlarged liver tallied with alcohol abuse. The level, even taking into account body decomposition, which affected the reading, was approximately 400 milligrams, five times above the legal driving limit.

"In general terms, with levels above 400 milligrams in 50 per cent of the population you would expect them to be at risk of death."

The MP, who had a constituency home near Atherstone, Warwickshire, had suffered "acute alcoholic intoxication", Dr Jerreat said.

The coroner recorded a verdict of misadventure on Mr Mills, 56, who was married but had no children.

Mandatory death penalty lifted for dangerous dogs

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE mandatory death penalty for dangerous dogs is to be abolished under government plans announced yesterday to reform a law rushed through parliament six years ago.

Magistrates are to be given greater discretion when deciding if an allegedly violent dog should be destroyed. The courts will have to be satisfied that it is safe to let the dog live. The index of exempted dogs is also to be re-opened where owners have a legitimate reason for not having registered their dogs years ago.

Tom Sackville, a junior Home Office Minister, said that some of the provisions of the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act could be relaxed because the Act achieved its main objectives "to reduce the number of pit bull terriers and, by deterring irresponsible dog owners, to raise the standard of dog ownership".

The Act was introduced after growing public concern at a series of violent attacks by dogs, particularly pit bull terriers. It came into force two months after being introduced into the Commons and has been widely criticised as being unnecessarily harsh. Accord-

ing to a Home Affairs Select Committee report, the measure has largely succeeded in protecting the public and encouraging responsible dog ownership. However, the committee had urged a number of reforms.

Roger Gale, Conservative chairman of the all-party Animal Welfare Group, said: "These changes should remove the worst effects of a Bill that was badly and hastily drafted and restore confidence in the system of justice while maintaining the essential protection of the public."

The Pet Advisory Committee said: "We welcome the Government's belated decision to amend the Act. However, we are disappointed that they have taken so long to accept the overwhelming weight of argument in favour of reform. As a result, millions of pounds of public money has been wasted and many dogs and their owners have been caused unnecessary suffering."

Under the Act, almost 8,600 pit bulls were registered by November 1991. By last October, the number was 3,600.

Golfer has emergency brain surgery

BY JOHN HOPKINS AND DAMIAN WHITWORTH

A PROMISING young British golf professional underwent an emergency brain operation yesterday after he was found unconscious in his hotel room on the eve of the Dubai Desert Classic event in the United Arab Emirates.

David Carter, 24, from Chesterfield, Derbyshire, who finished 33rd on the European tour last season, was believed to have had fluid on his brain. Two weeks ago he hit his head on a waterslide in Sun City, South Africa, and suffered concussion.

Iain Pyman, a fellow professional who visited Carter yesterday, said he was better



David Carter, who was discovered unconscious

but would be kept in hospital for a week. He said a group of golfers had raised the alarm when Carter could not be roused in his hotel room after telling them he was sick and

having headaches. A doctor was called but Carter could still not be roused. "The doctor was punching him and getting no response," said Pyman. "We phoned for an

ambulance and two neurosurgeons came. They said it was a life-threatening situation. At the hospital he had two brain scans and after the second he was taken into the operating theatre.

"When we saw him today he said he could remember nothing about yesterday. He was a bit frightened and was glad when we came."

Carter was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, after his British parents had moved there. Bryan, his father, is a club professional who now teaches at a driving range in Chesterfield. David Carter won the 1994 Qualifying School at Montpellier, France by five strokes and the Indian PGA last December.

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SATURDAY
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meets Alistair
McAlpine
in
Weekend



ONE FOOT IN
THE PAST
Richard Wilson
models three
decades of men's
fashion
in the
Magazine

Teenagers face toughest grammar test for 25 years

By DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

FOURTEEN-year-olds will take their most exacting grammar tests for 25 years this summer in the Government's drive to ensure schools spend more time teaching the basics. New English tests will ask them to identify subordinate clauses and adverbial phrases for the first time since sentence construction disappeared from O-level papers in the 1970s.

The new paper is being introduced in addition to national curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. For the first time, pupils aged 14 will also sit a rapid-response mental arithmetic test.

The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority said yesterday that one third of schools had volunteered for the trial run of the 50-minute paper on grammar, spelling and punctuation, to be taken as part of the English tests for 14-year-olds in May. However, it said its own survey of English teachers had showed that, although they felt able to teach the use of paragraphs and the difference between nouns and adverbs, many were not confident in teaching technical aspects of grammar.

Nick Tate, chief executive of the authority, said it would send guidance to teachers with the tests: "There are clearly going to be some schools, perhaps many, who will have to put greater emphasis on these things... than they do at present." He wanted "zero

ENGLISH QUESTIONS

These are sample questions:
1 Underline the subjects of two verbs in the following sentence: "The conductor slammed the door loudly, and with a clank of scrap-metal, the bus moved off."
2 Read the sentence "For a second the man in the dark suit, who was just about to jump on the running-board, hung suspended in mid-air as if some invisible hand was hauling him up by the hair." The sentence has a main clause and two subordinate clauses. Underline one of the subordinate clauses.
Answers: 1 conductor, bus 2 who was just about to jump on the running-board; as if some invisible hand was hauling him up by the hair.

ARITHMETIC QUESTIONS

Five seconds each to answer:
1 Write four fifths as a decimal
2 Increase £60 by 5 per cent
Ten seconds to answer:
3 Write all the prime numbers between 12 and 18
4 How many minutes are there altogether in 6½ hours?
5 A quadrilateral has three angles which are all 80 degrees. What is the size of the fourth angle?
6 Write, as a decimal, seven divided by 25
7 What is three divided by 0.01?
15 seconds to answer:
8 What is six to the power of four divided by six to the power of three?
9 Pat cycles ten kilometres in 40 minutes. What is Pat's average speed in kilometres per hour?
10 Look at this calculation: 18.9 x 9.95 divided by 4.06 x 4.12. Write an approximate answer.
Answers: 1 0.8 2 £63 12. 3 17 4 390 mins 5 120 degrees 6 0.287 3008 69 15 km/h 10 acceptable answers range from 8 to 12.

tolerance" of poor punctuation, bad spelling and weak grammar in pupils' written work. But he said formal lessons were not the only way of teaching grammar and he hoped schools would not jeopardise the creative aspects of English.

The tests were introduced in response to an outcry from

employers and universities over declining standards in basic language and number usage. Test results for 11-year-olds last summer showed only 54 per cent in mathematics and 58 per cent in English reached expected levels. The authority will review the trials before grammar and punctuation become compulsory tests

next year. The Institute of Directors, which has consistently complained about poor literacy and numeracy among school-leavers, welcomed the proposed tests.

Ruth Lea, head of policy, said: "The fact that we should have to go backwards to place this kind of emphasis on vital basic skills is a useful condemnation of how far we have gone wrong over the past 15 years."

However, the National Association for the Teaching of English yesterday criticised the 50-minute grammar tests, which will be taken on May 6, saying "many of the approaches exemplified are more likely to mislead teachers than to further good teaching."

Anne Barnes, spokeswoman for the association, said: "A lot of the sample questions are... time-wasting and don't relate to the needs of children. They will mean children able to do mechanical tests will get high marks quite out of proportion to their ability. They will compel teachers to waste time teaching grammatical terminology, which is largely a waste of time."

More than two thirds of secondary schools have signed up for the extra 20-minute mental arithmetic paper, to be taken by 14-year-olds on May 9 or 12.

Pupils will have between five and 15 seconds to respond to each of 28 questions on the lower level paper and 32 for brighter children. Six in ten primary schools will take the mental arithmetic paper for 11-year-olds on May 12.



Brenda Davies, who said the head and governors had not given adequate support

Teacher in smacking row resigns, blaming stress

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

A TEACHER who was disciplined for allowing a five-year-old pupil to smack bullying classmates with a ruler disclosed yesterday that she had resigned and was planning to take her case to an industrial tribunal.

Brenda Davies, who is to claim constructive dismissal, accused the head teacher and management at Tennyson Road Primary School, Luton, of failing to support her. She said she had decided to resign before she became ill through stress.

Mrs Davies, a teacher for 27 years, said she still believed she had been right to allow the boy a chance to stand up to his tormentors, but would think twice before doing the same again. The incident last October split parents at the 160-pupil school and led to a disciplinary hearing which resulted in a final written warning for the teacher.

At the time, Mrs Davies said that the victim, who has learning difficulties, had been kicked "like a football" in the playground by six boys aged five and six. She gave him the choice of forgiving them or smacking them on the hand with a wooden ruler.

A teacher has been cleared of smacking an eight-year-old pupil for misbehaving. A jury at Bradford Crown Court took only an hour yesterday to find Nirbhaj Singh Bhandal of Bingley, west Yorkshire, not guilty of assaulting the girl, who cannot be identified for legal reasons. Mr Bhandal, who teaches in Bradford, had been suspended from work after the girl alleged he hit her last April. He said she had walked into a door he was closing.

Mrs Davies, 49, said yesterday: "I still think I did the right thing. Five-year-olds are capable of being little monsters. So if you don't nip things in the bud, you end up with something much worse. It certainly worked: they didn't bully any more."

Parents who launched a petition in support of Mrs Davies clashed with others who thought that she should have been sacked. She continued to teach at the school for several weeks after the disciplinary hearing, but went on

sick leave at the beginning of December.

Mrs Davies said: "The stress has got to the point where I need psychiatric therapy and I don't want to end up like so many other teachers, retiring through ill-health. I want to go on to teach somewhere else."

"The stress was down to the lack of support I got from the headmaster and governors and the fact that parents and teachers have told me they feel too intimidated to support me. Although it breaks my heart to leave the children at Tennyson Road, I want to get back to the classroom and I think it will have to be somewhere else."

Graeme Russell, the head teacher, confirmed that he had received Mrs Davies's resignation. "I understand that she is considering taking this matter to an industrial tribunal, in which case it would be inappropriate for me to discuss the matter any further," he said in a statement.

A spokesman for the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers said that the union was no longer acting for Mrs Davies and declined to comment on her resignation.

Duke loses battle to save woods

The Government has declined to support a campaign by the Duke of Edinburgh, as president of the World Wide Fund for Nature, calling upon counties to protect 10 per cent of their ancient and semi-natural woodlands. Britain, along with the US and several European countries, says existing conservation measures are enough.

Train 'hijacked'

Commuters forced the driver of the 9.20pm from London Victoria to Brighton to stop at their stations after dozens of services operated by Conner SouthCentral were delayed or cancelled.

Royal train death

Roger Breeze, 50, a railwayman of Burslem, Cheshire, was killed when hit by a train carrying the Duke of Edinburgh last June. Warrington Coroner's Court was told. Verdict: accidental death.

Slow M25 safer

The imposition of variable speed limits along the M25 has cut the number of accidents by 28 per cent since the system started 18 months ago. Restricting speed has made traffic move more freely.

Let it be decided

The Oxford Union will debate tonight whether the Beatles were better than Oasis. Paul Gallagher, brother of two of Oasis's members, will put their case against Neil Innes, the songwriter.

Italian police seek to question ex-Sotheby's staff

By STEPHEN FARRELL AND DALYA ALBERGE

ITALIAN police have formally requested an interview with a retired head of antiquities at Sotheby's amid allegations that the auction house systematically smuggled art treasures to Britain.

The Carabinieri's art theft division passed the request to Scotland Yard through Interpol, seeking to question Felicity Nicholson and her one-time administrator James Hodges. Miss Nicholson and Mr Hodges would be treated as witnesses, not suspects, and could refuse to take part.

The move arises from allegations in *The Times* and on Channel 4's *Dispatches* that Sotheby's Old Masters expert in Milan, Rodolfo Kollerwijn, arranged to smuggle a portrait by the 18th century Italian artist Giuseppe Nogari to London last March. Within days, Mr Kollerwijn had resigned, a director of the London Old Masters department had been suspended, and Sotheby's had begun a review of its procedures. Mr Hodges and Miss Nicholson worked for a different department from Mr Kollerwijn and were based in London.

The Italians have extended their investigation beyond the Nogari allegation to include allegations of the widespread looting and sale of artefacts stolen from tombs and religious sites.

Prosecutors in Rome spent two weeks studying translated transcripts of a trial at Knightsbridge Crown Court in 1991 in which Mr Hodges, then 34, was jailed for nine months for forgery, false accounting and theft of a bronze helmet and terracotta bowl from Sotheby's. He was cleared on 18 other charges after claiming that he had set up false bank accounts and stored items at home with his superiors' knowledge and support.

During the trial, Miss Nicholson, among others, gave evidence which provided an insight into the art world. She admitted handling items that she suspected had been smuggled.



Nicholson: has retired as head of antiquities

gled and that she would exclude an item from sale only if there was firm evidence of wrongdoing. She was shown a memorandum in which she had admitted finding "the shady side of the antiquities market not uncongenial".

A Scotland Yard source confirmed yesterday that its Art and Antiques Unit had been approached by the Italian authorities to facilitate interviews with Mr Hodges, Miss Nicholson and Sotheby's. "The request covers 29 points of Miss Nicholson's evidence that they want to raise regarding lots that went through Sotheby's," the source said. "We will assist and will seek to interview both parties."

He said that the Italians had also asked for the seizure of the items referred to in court but pointed out the difficulties because "these sales took place a long time ago".

A Sotheby's spokesman said: "We are not aware of any request from the Italian police being made through Interpol. If one is made, we'll be co-operating with the police in any inquiries."

Miss Nicholson, who retired last July, said last night: "You should talk to Sotheby's. I do not want to comment." Mr Hodges left the art world after his release from jail and now lives in America.

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Strangled Kayleigh found washed up on riverbank

BY ADAM FRESCO

THE body of nine-year-old Kayleigh Ward, who had been missing since December, has been found on a riverbank. She had been strangled and sexually assaulted.

The partially clothed body was found on Tuesday by a passerby about a mile from the girl's home in Chester, where she was last seen on December 19 when she went out to buy a bag of chips. Detectives described the case as "the most horrific murder inquiry" they had worked on.

The body was identified by Kayleigh's mother, Yvonne Ward, with whom she had been living in a hostel, and her aunt, Beverley Ward. Yesterday the aunt said that the family had not been prepared for her death. "We kept our hopes up that Kayleigh would be alive," she said. "How can you be prepared to expect a child who goes down to the chippy never to come back?"

The police have been marvellous. They have got children themselves and have supported the family."

The aunt added: "She was loved, and she is going to



Beverley Ward yesterday: she said she had never lost hope that her niece, right, would return alive

be missed. Kayleigh was called Odd Bod: that was not something nasty, but because she was a funny little child. The kids nicknamed Kayleigh because she put on a pair of socks that were odd. It was just her sense of humour. She had a wicked little laugh."

Detective Superintendent Dave Jones, head of the investigation, said yesterday: "It is by far the most horrific murder inquiry I have had to work on and I would like to pay tribute to my officers. We were



always hopeful we would be able to find her alive. Sadly, that was not the case.

"The post-mortem found that she had been strangled before being put into the river where she was found. There was signs of indecent assault and we are hoping that further forensic tests will develop what has exactly taken place."

"The pathologist tells me the body had been under water for a considerable length of time, probably from soon after she first went missing. We are

looking for other items of clothing."

The area of the River Dee where the body was found, by a man walking his dog, had been searched by uniformed police and divers earlier in the investigation. The body may have been dislodged by a particularly high tide.

Kayleigh's friends said a special prayer yesterday during assembly at Blacon Hall Junior School. The headmaster, Nigel Campbell, said: "We are all deeply shocked and upset. We had never given up hoping that she might just have gone away somewhere."

"She had a lively personality, was well liked, and could be an absolute treasure. That is exactly how we shall all remember her."

Counselors from the education service were being made available to help pupils and staff at the school, which Kayleigh attended for 18 months.

A man was last night charged with the rape and murder of Kayleigh Ward. John O'Shaughnessy, 30, from Blacon, Chester, was due to appear before magistrates in the city today.



Divers searching for clues yesterday after the discovery of Kayleigh Ward's body

Police find body of Zoe Evans

POLICE in Wiltshire have found a body believed to be that of the schoolgirl Zoe Evans (Kathryn Knight writes). It was hidden in dense undergrowth at the Bronze Age burial ground of Bantlesbury Hill. About half a mile from Zoe's home in Warminster, the spot backs on



Zoe Evans

to Ministry of Defence land. Zoe, 9, went missing from her home on January 11 while her mother Paula, 28, thought she was in bed. Her stepfather Miles Evan, 23, a driver with the Royal Logistics Corps, was charged with her murder on February 4.

Mr Evans is due to appear again before West Wiltshire Magistrates in Trowbridge on March 12.

Girl's diaries 'preoccupied with killing'

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A GIRL accused of murdering a teenage hairdresser at the age of 12 was preoccupied and evil, a court was told yesterday. She was constantly preoccupied by the death in "chilling" diary entries in the years after the killing of Katie Rackliff in June, 1992.

Stewart Jones, QC, for the prosecution, told Winchester Crown Court: "We submit to you that this was no ordinary 12-year-old girl. We say she was a precocious and evil girl and we submit that that is demonstrated not only by what she did, but by what she has said and written about it afterwards."

The girl, now 17, denies murdering Miss Rackliff, 18, from Hawley, Hampshire, who suffered 29 stab wounds, some of which went through her body; there were also wounds to her private parts. Mr Jones said on Tuesday that the accused girl had been haunted by the killing, and had alternatively exulted over it, even going so far as to mention sexual pleasure she had gained from it at the time.

Yesterday he took the jury through her diaries of 1994, 1995 and 1996 in which, he said, she was preoccupied by the death. A diary entry from January 13, 1995, read: "Remember K.R. Oh God, she'd get me going so hot, pity really. I think about it and my head is spinning, but against the cops I'm winning."

An entry from March 7, 1995, read: "I bet she's all bone

and maggots by now. She shouldn't have tested."

Another entry read: "If only I could kill you again, I promise I'd make you suffer more, you slag. Your terrified screams turn me on."

Among other entries read to the court was one from December 7, 1995, which said: "Two and a half years today, I put that slag in the ground."

Mr Jones said the mathematics was wrong, as by then it was three and a half years.

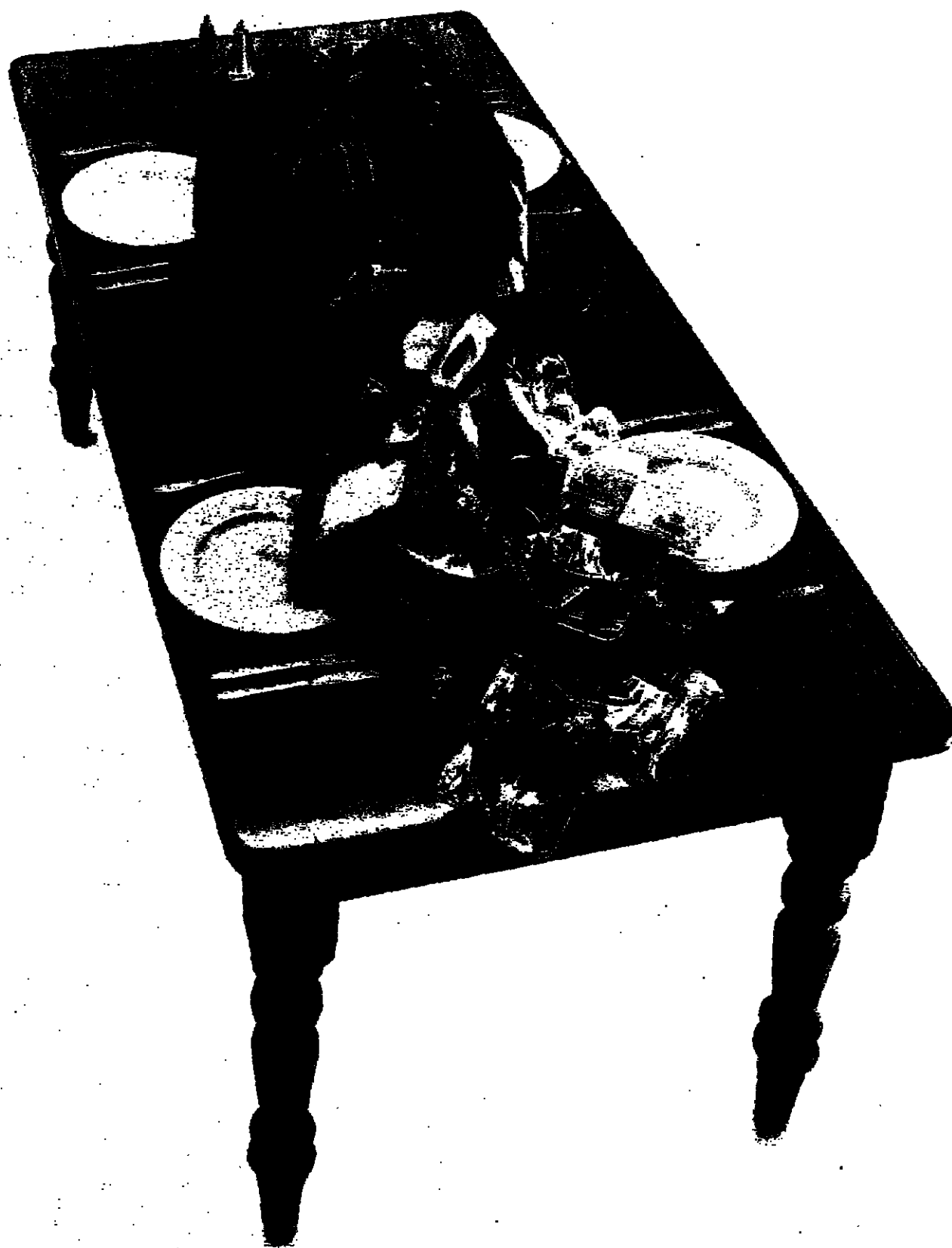
The girl had also written a poem, including the lines: "You keep on blacking out and your pulse is low/Stop trying to fight the Reaper, just relax and let it go."

Mr Jones said that when police were interviewing the girl in May last year, a social worker had a private word with her, and the girl said that she had stabbed Miss Rackliff numerous times, undressed her, touched the body, then used the knife. She had told the social worker she had taken a gold bracelet from the body. The fact that one had been removed had always been kept secret by the police.

Back in the interview room, she had agreed "these devastating and irresistibly incriminating details". She had since retracted her admissions.

Annette Cini, a prison officer, told the court she had had a conversation with the accused in January, 1996, in which the girl said she had murdered someone.

The trial continues.



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John Ward, who has worked tirelessly to unmask the killers of his daughter Julie in Kenya in 1988

Fresh clues in Julie Ward case

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE father of Julie Ward, who has tirelessly investigated her murder in a Kenyan game reserve in 1988, will fly to Nairobi for the 60th time on Saturday for what could be the final stage of his quest to unmask her killers.

John Ward, 64, will meet the Kenyan Attorney-General, who has received a report believed to name a police officer and two employees of the Masai Mara reserve where Julie, 28, was last seen.

Mr Ward, an hotelier, from Brockley Green, Suffolk, who has spent £500,000 trying to track down his daughter's killers, said: "We might be coming to the end of this investigation. The Attorney-General might decide there is

sufficient evidence to charge them. The three were my original suspects." Mr Ward has returned from Denmark where a former Kenyan policeman who claims he saw the murder has been living under UN protection.

Julie Ward, who was on a trip to photograph wildlife, was last seen at the reserve on September 6, 1988. Six days later her father flew to Kenya and hired a light aircraft to search for her.

Her jeep was found with SOS scrawled on its roof and the next day Mr Ward found his daughter's jaw bone and part of a leg by a bonfire. In 1992, two game wardens from the Masai Mara were acquitted of the murder.

مکذا من راصل

Bar defeats bid to end monopoly of jury trials

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

THE Bar and the senior judiciary yesterday combined to kill off the Lord Chancellor's attempt to end barristers' monopoly of jury trials.

The Lord Chancellor and four senior judges unexpectedly backed down over what was to have been the culminating measure in the Government's reforms of the legal system. Crown prosecutors will not be able to appear in Crown Court trials on their own. Other lawyers employed by private organisations or central or local government will be barred from handling substantive High Court civil actions without a private-practice lawyer.

The decision is a blow to the Crown Prosecution Service and to the Law Society, and the latter reacted with disappointment. A spokesman said: "Employed lawyers will not be able to exercise advocacy rights on their own in almost all the circumstances in which they would wish to do so. The Lord Chancellor's efforts to overcome restrictive practices on rights of audience have been frustrated."

The Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 paved the way for advocacy rights to be opened up beyond the Bar to solicitors and other professionals. Solicitors in private practice in 1993 won the right to appear in higher courts,

Lawyers are expecting a flood of applications when divorce becomes legal in the Republic of Ireland today. About 90,000 of the 3.6 million population are separated. The Free Legal Aid Board has already received 1,000 requests for help in obtaining a divorce. Thousands more are expected to apply although it is believed many are adopting a "wait and see" attitude to the courts procedure. A referendum in November 1995 ended the 1937 constitutional ban by a majority of less than 1 per cent.

subject to stringent criteria. The issue of "employed" lawyers — and especially those in the Crown Prosecution Service — has deeply divided the profession and also the senior judges, who, under the 1990 Act, make the final decision.

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham of Cornhill, and the Master of the Rolls, Lord Woolf, had all been thought to favour granting wider advocacy rights to employed lawyers. But Sir Richard Scott, the Vice-Chancellor, and Sir Stephen Brown, the President of the High Court family division, have ex-

pressed concerns about allowing the CPS to conduct jury trials. In the light of their views, the five judges have agreed to only a limited relaxation of the rules.

Crown prosecutors will be able to conduct guilty pleas, which form the bulk of Crown Court work and directions hearings. But the Bar has in effect retained the jewel of its criminal work, jury trials. The decision has also scuppered any move towards what, according to the Bar, would be a state prosecution service.

The Lord Chancellor's Department put an optimistic gloss on the decision yesterday, heralding the news as "employed solicitors granted rights of audience in the higher courts". Lord Mackay said the decision denoted a continuation of "sensible policies of reform". Robert Owen, QC, chairman of the Bar, hoped the debate on advocacy rights was now over.

At present, lawyers who work in the CPS, in the government legal service, local government or commerce or industry, have limited rights of audience. In 1995-96, the CPS paid £73 million in fees to private-practice barristers. Yesterday's changes apply to employed solicitors; employed barristers are to be considered separately but the same rules are likely to apply.



Check mate: Red or Dead gave a city-smart twist to country style in their autumn/winter collection, presented at the Natural History Museum

Streetwear taken for a rural ride on catwalk

By Grace Bradbury, Style Editor

STYLISH youths will soon be sporting hacking jackets, knickerbockers and diamond-checked socks, according to one of the country's most influential designers.

Wayne Hemingway, of the streetwear label Red or Dead, turned youth rebellion on its head at London Fashion Week with clothes reminiscent of an Edwardian shooting party — save for the eccentric detailing and mismatched colours.

It remains to be seen whether Hemingway, 36, rendered the look palatable to the under-25s who buy Red or Dead. The tweed knickerbockers, teamed with orange and green check shirts and burnt orange polo-necks, would have slotted into the wardrobe of Diana Spencer circa 1980. Cord trousers were cropped for both men and women. The men wore them with green granddad cardigans; the women with brown, patterned tank-tops and geometric print shirts.

Later, there were denim pencil skirts and chiffon tunic shirts. The final dress followed the Jane Austen craze: it was red and empire line, with a chiffon bodice.

In contrast to Red or Dead's youth style, Pearce Fionda showed exquisite evening wear at Harrods. Sheath and drape-neck dresses were in soft camel, grey green and window-pane check.



Tokeley-Parry: ill

Antiquities smuggling trial halted

The trial of an antiquities restorer accused of handling 5,000-year-old artefacts smuggled from Egypt has been halted at Southwark Crown Court because of his ill health.

Jonathan Tokeley-Parry, 45, from Winkleigh, Devon, faced three charges of handling stolen goods, including a bronze figure of the god Horus and false doors from the tombs of King Pepi and Heterika between June 1992 and December 1993. A new trial will start on May 12.

Sex change case

A 51-year-old man with two children who is seeking sex-change surgery has won permission to bring a High Court test case to challenge Shropshire Health Authority's refusal to provide NHS funding for the operation.

Tory's libel win

Julian Lewis, the Tory prospective parliamentary candidate for the New Forest, accepted £16,000 libel damages over an article in the satirical magazine *Sallymag* which alleged that he was rumoured to be homosexual.

Player accused

The Manchester City footballer Peter Beagrie has been charged with indecently assaulting two women during a night out in St Helier, Jersey. The winger, 31, was released on bail and will face magistrates next month.

Mincer death

A 51-year-old man died after falling into the mincing machine he was cleaning. The man, who has not been named, was trapped in the machine for two hours after the accident at Beni Foods in Milton Keynes. An inquest will be held.

Shark trapped

A 5ft blue shark found trapped in a gully at low tide in Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Northumberland, was put out of its misery by Ray Price, 45. "It was barely alive," he said. "I don't think it would have survived if I'd put it back."

Doctor questions disaster inquest

By Stewart Tindler, Crime Correspondent

NEW evidence from a hospital doctor who treated dying casualties of the Hillsborough disaster may be used to challenge the inquest verdicts and prompt a new investigation into police action.

Victims' relatives believe Dr Walker, who was not called to give evidence at the inquest, has raised important questions about whether more people could have survived the disaster in which 96 football fans died on April 15, 1989.

Writing in the latest edition of *Hospital Doctor*, Dr Walker questions evidence given at the inquest about times of death. He says he tended more than a dozen people at Northern General Hospital in Sheffield. His first patient, Philip Hammond, 14, had a pulse and a heartbeat but died at about 3.40pm.

Dr Stefan Popper, the Sheffield coroner, ruled at the inquest that by 3.15pm many victims were already brain

dead. He refused to hear any evidence about what happened after this time. The inquest recorded verdicts of accidental death.

Dr Walker says: "The pathologist said at the inquest that Philip was probably dead before he reached hospital, but technically his heart was still beating. My main concern is that I was never asked to give evidence at the inquest."

The Hillsborough Family Support Group plans to use the anaesthetist's testimony to ask the High Court to quash the verdicts of accidental death. Solicitors may also apply to the Director of Public Prosecutions for a criminal investigation into South Yorkshire Police, which handled the disaster.

Trevor Hicks, chairman of the support group, said the evidence raised questions as to whether all the victims had the best possible chance of survival.

Rapist of new mother is jailed

By Joanna Bale

A MASKED man who broke into a woman's house and raped her in front of her two young children was jailed for 14 years yesterday.

Steffan Sergeant, 19, held a shard of broken glass to the 22-year-old woman's throat then blindfolded her with a balaclava before carrying out his attack. During her ordeal, the woman, who had given birth to a daughter ten days before, tried to comfort her three-year-old son who was screaming in terror.

Sergeant, of Leicester, who was convicted by a jury of one charge of rape and one of aggravated burglary after a trial at Leicester Crown Court last November, was sentenced by Mr Justice Hadden in the High Court in London yesterday. The judge told him: "Your inhuman selfishness and your callous dismissal of anyone's feelings but your own was total. It has had a terrible effect on your victim's whole life. She has had to move, but still feels frightened. She doesn't feel safe even with people she knows — she knew you. The little boy still speaks about the man who hurt mummy and wakes up screaming."

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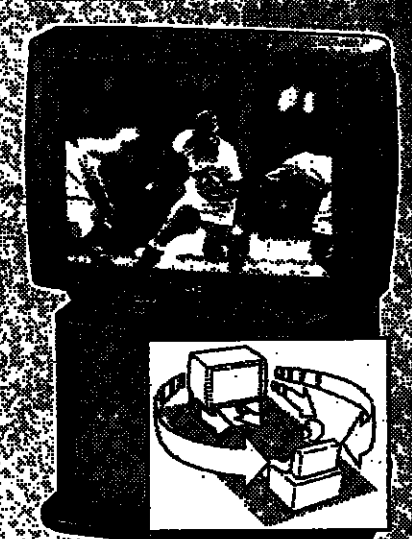
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THE MAN FROM THE PRU.

PRUDENTIAL

Puzzle of parliamentary low-flyers with sky-high earnings

The amount that MPs earn from outside interests appears to be inversely related to their ability. With only a few exceptions, the top earning MPs are among the less talented members. That, rather than the evident inconsistencies of declaration, is the most striking feature of the new register of members' interests published this week.

Most attention has naturally focused on which MPs earn a lot from consultancies related to membership of the Commons. But as interesting is why companies should wish to employ them. The same issue is raised by the proliferation of public and

government affairs consultancies set up by, and employing, former MPs, prospective candidates, former special advisers and party researchers. They all trade on the political ignorance and naivety of business, emphasising, and usually exaggerating, their supposed inside track to people with power. There is a lot of froth.

Some MPs can provide sensible and shrewd advice to companies on the latest political and economic developments. And no journalist should begrudge the right of an MP to supplement his backbench salary, even after the rise to £43,000, provided that everything is fully declared. I believe that



MPs should not be full time and should be allowed to have outside interests. That is specifically what the Nolan report said and what the Commons subsequently approved.

More puzzling are which MPs have big earning power. Top of the list is, as last year, Roy Hattersley but his income of up to £110,000 comes from his talents as a man of letters. More eye-raising is the £46,000 to £55,000 which Robert Atkins earns from four consultancies providing parlia-

mentary services, including to William Hill and ICL. Mr Atkins is a gregarious, bouncy chap, who spent eight undistinguished years as a junior and middle ranking minister. He knows about the computer industry, but is not noted for his original or perceptive insights.

The same can be said for other big earners such as Sir Dudley Smith, Paul Marland, Jack Aspinwall, Patrick Nicholls and Sir Archibald Hamilton. The latter, a member of the Standards and Privileges Committee, earns between £22,000 and £45,000 from five consultancies or from providing parliamentary services. This

includes Merrill Lynch Europe. Sir Archibald is a member of the Tories' regimental rather than reflective tendency, known for his bottom rather than his brains.

Of course, the Commons cannot be full of intellectual high-flyers, and there is a place for the worthy and the mediocre. At least, these MPs have declared their earnings from the provision of services in their capacity as MPs. This now involves just advice, since advocacy on behalf of outside bodies or persons is banned. The main loophole is the reference to "their capacity as MPs". Some claim that their consultancies are unrelated to being members of the

Commons and are because of their non-political experience. David Mellor records in the register that his services from 11 consultancies have never been provided in his capacity as an MP and are not dependent on his being an MP. Other members have been less explicit and there is no obligation to declare other outside earnings. Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, writes in his introduction that there "continue to be apparent inconsistencies in the interpretation" of the rules. This is a priority for the next Parliament.

But it is still odd that distin-

guished, and successful, companies find it worth hiring some of these MPs as consultants. Unless these MPs have been hiding pearls of wisdom, the companies might have saved money, and be better informed, by taking out a subscription to a few national newspapers and weeklies and employing a bright young researcher to monitor government and parliamentary papers on the Internet. The ability of these MPs to earn such money from consultancies is, I suppose, a triumph, for the mysteries of the market.

PETER RIDDELL

Heseltine to play peace role in heat of Tory campaign

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

MICHAEL HESELTINE has taken on the critical election campaign role of keeping the peace between rival Tory power groups.

The Deputy Prime Minister is seen as the only one who can prevent a damaging row developing from the tension between election strategists and the New Labour New Danger advertising team. "He will be the glue which will keep this operation together," a Central Office source said.

Mr Heseltine is also being put forward as the public face of the campaign. "He will be our rapid response and rapid rebuttal unit on the television and radio. He is still our best heavyweight performer," the source said.

Lord Cranborne, the Leader of the House of Lords, is being drafted into 10 Downing Street as the Prime Minister's eyes and ears during the campaign. Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, will direct operations from Conservative Central Office. A third significant influence is Maurice Saatchi, the advertising guru behind the New Labour New Danger campaign.

The role of Lord Cranborne, who ran Mr Major's 1995 party leadership campaign, is a potential source of conflict with Central Office. It has

been dismissed as peripheral and unimportant by some strategists. "He will be running the country not the campaign while the Prime Minister is out on the hustings," one Central Office official said. But John Major may yet name Lord Cranborne as his Chief of Staff which would destroy that notion.

The role of Dr Mawhinney has been downgraded because he is perceived to be ineffective on television and radio. He will front the morning press conferences at Central Office but during the rest of the day will work behind the scenes. His media role will be restricted to regional tours.

The overshadowing on presentation of a Tory party chairman is unprecedented in an election campaign. Cecil Parkinson, Norman Tebbit, and Chris Patten, dominated the airwaves during the 1983, 1987 and 1992 elections.

Mr Heseltine will be the conduit between Downing Street and Central Office, particularly in the event of territorial disputes. He will also be an important link between the increasingly important centre of influence on the campaign: the Soho offices of M & C Saatchi.

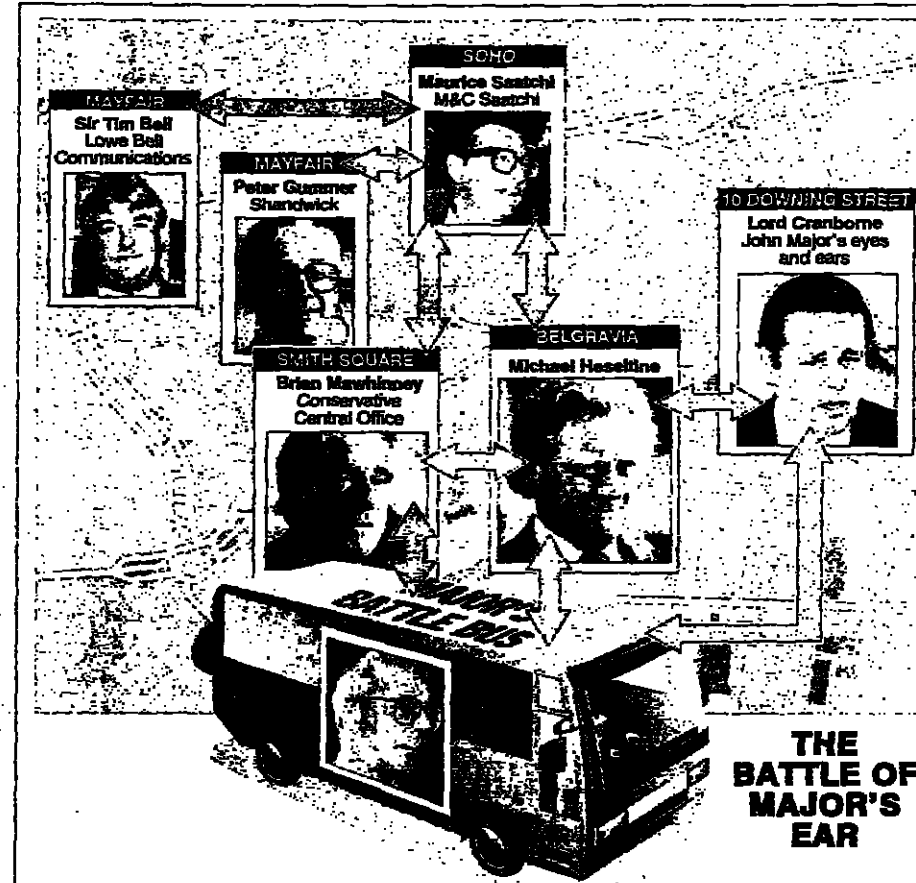
The newly ennobled Maurice Saatchi has enormous

sway over the direction of the campaign, which has caused resentment and anxiety in some quarters of Conservative Central Office. Lord Saatchi of Staplefield has an open line to number 10 Downing Street and enjoys the full confidence of the Prime Minister.

Sir Tim Bell and Peter Gummer, the new Lord Chadlington, who are the other members of the advertising triad behind New Labour New Danger, will attend daily meetings at Central Office with Lord Saatchi.

The three men, business rivals but good friends, secure agreement for the concept of their advertising strategy when they meet Dr Mawhinney. But the finished product is delivered by M & C Saatchi only days or even hours before the launch — too late for any radical changes, according to Central Office critics. "They are not known as the Three Musketeers for nothing. Their motto is: all for one and one for all. They present a fait accompli to Central Office," an official said.

The Maurice Saatchi style, self-assured and confident after working on successive Tory election campaigns, has added to the sense of unease at Central Office. Norman Blackwell, the head of the



Downing Street Policy Unit, has joined forces with Dr Mawhinney to try to ensure the advertising agency's work is tested by focus groups. The formidable diplomatic skills of Sir Tim Bell, the ultimate salesman of the advertising trio, will be tested to the limit.

The large behind-the-scenes cast list has triggered fears that a timebomb has already begun ticking inside the newly established war room at Central Office. Unwelcome memories of the 1987 election campaign have flooded back. Lord Young of Graffham was

brought in by Margaret Thatcher to keep an eye on the campaign and Norman Tebbit, her party chairman. Lord Young secretly brought in Sir Tim Bell.

The campaign detonated in 1987 on "wobbly Thursday" when opinion polls showed the Tories lead to have slumped. Sir Tim was ordered by Lord Young to come up with an alternative advertising strategy. Lord Tebbit was enraged. In the ensuing row Lord Young lost control, grabbed Lord Tebbit by the shoulders, and declared: "Norman we

are going to lose this election." Bell's advertisements won the day and Mrs Thatcher the election.

Veterans of the 1987 campaign have cast Lord Cranborne, a scion of the Cecil dynasty, in the Lord Young role. But Central Office appointments predicted that if Dr Mawhinney cannot crack the whip Mr Heseltine will have to intervene. "With the Prime Minister out on the road it will be down to Heseltine to keep the operation running on the straight and narrow," the Tory strategist said.

Labour confused over charitable status for schools

By Jill Sherman, Chief Political Correspondent

LABOUR'S policy on charitable status for schools was thrown into confusion last night when an education spokesman suggested that some public schools may not "deserve" to keep it.

Peter Kilfoyle, a Labour education spokesman, appeared to contradict recent comments by David Blunkett, his boss, by saying that some wealthy schools that had been designated charitable institutions in the past might not be able to sustain this status.

In an interview earlier this month Mr Blunkett suggested there would be no threat to the present scheme, under which many public schools, including Eton, get tax relief and rates relief if they have charitable status.

But he did indicate that independent schools would have to show they earned their charitable status by providing teaching or recreational facilities to nearby state schools.

Writing in the *Prep School Magazine*, published last week, Mr Kilfoyle said: "If for example there is a wealthy school, designated as a charitable institution because hundred of years ago it was set up with a charitable purpose, but it no longer operates as such, it seems to me that this is not a sustainable position for it when there are so many deserving causes."

The apparent split came as Tony Blair called for greater

discipline in his party and urged the Shadow Cabinet to present a "united team against the Tories". During an afternoon strategy meeting of the Shadow Cabinet, Mr Blair made clear that the party had to behave in contrast to the "division and ideological battles raging in the Tory party". His warning followed a spate of events where shadow ministers appeared to contradict each other. The main example was Robin Cook's denial that Labour intended to privatise the Tate after the idea had been suggested by Gordon Brown's office.

Mr Kilfoyle's comments were immediately dismissed by David Blunkett's office, which said: "We have no plans, or proposals to change charitable status."

Sources close to Mr Blunkett confirmed that the party had carried out a review of the government's policy of charitable status but had not been persuaded that it needed to be changed.

They argued that Mr Kilfoyle's article was based on a speech that he had made several months ago. Mr Kilfoyle later put out a statement saying: "The Labour Party has no proposals to change the charitable status of independent schools. We want to see independent and state schools working more closely together to help raise standards."

Cleese seeks help with Lib Dem problem

By Polly Newton, Political Reporter

THE comedy actor John Cleese has been drafted in by the Liberal Democrats to tackle one of their most enduring problems: voters' reluctance to back a party they believe has no chance of winning.

In a party political broadcast to be screened tonight, Cleese invites people to

suggest how the Liberal Democrats could counter the "wasted vote" argument. The party has already distributed two million reply-paid postcards, with a picture of Cleese and the words: "I've got a little problem... can you help?"

The broadcast, also available on the Internet, says that polls show that one in two people would vote Liberal Democrat if they thought the party could win. After

a brief facial spasm of frustration that will be familiar to Cleese fans, he points out that with 50 per cent of the vote the party would have a landslide victory, but adds: "We should be so lucky."

Cleese, a long-standing Liberal Democrat supporter, also seeks to reassure voters that the party has plenty of experience at "running things" through its control of numerous local authorities.

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Dexter's books are worldwide bestsellers and his *Inspector Morse* television series topped the ratings with 18 million viewers. Minette Walters has also had television success with *The Sculptress*, which will be followed in May by *The Ice House*. The admission price includes £2 off the price of Walters's new novel *The Echo* (£16.99) and £1 off Dexter's *Death is Now My Neighbour* (£9.99), both published by Macmillan.

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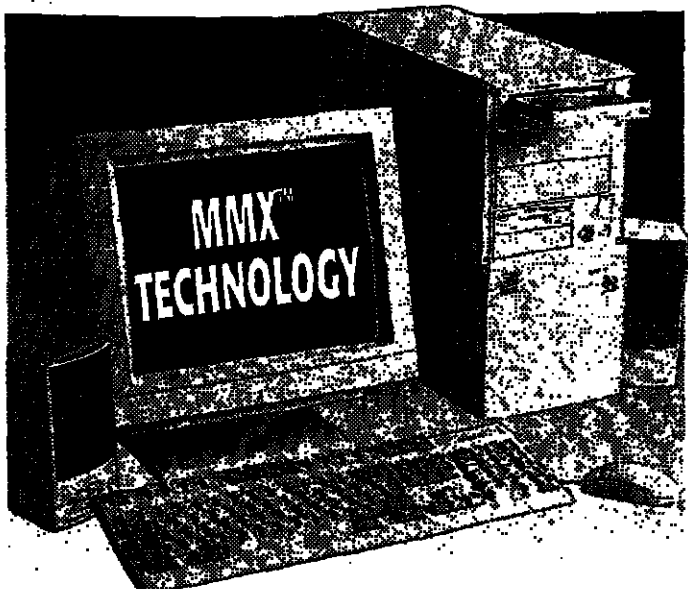
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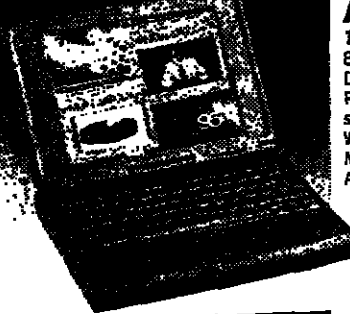
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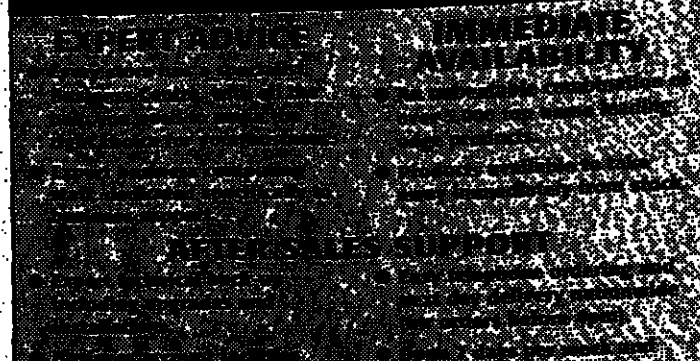
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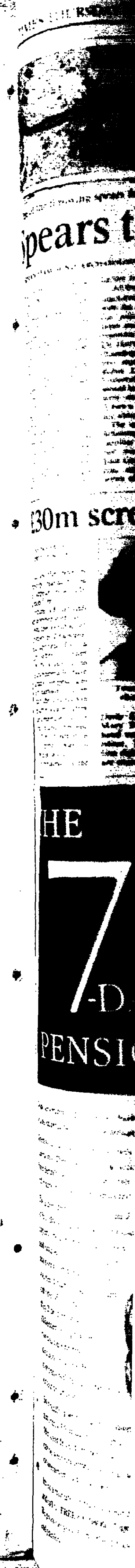
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One of the throwing spears found in the opencast mine at Schöningen, together with a pelvic bone from a horse, a favoured target. The point, below, was cut from the denser timber at the root end

Spears throw fresh light on ancient man the hunter

By NORMAN HAMMOND, ARCHAEOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

THE world's oldest throwing spears have been found at a coal mine in Germany. Dating back some 400,000 years, they were carefully made and well balanced javelins, used for hunting big game, including elephant, rhino and especially horses.

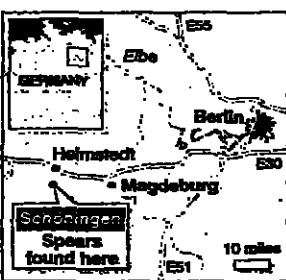
The find gives credence to the idea that early human beings were active and efficient hunters, not just scavengers. Some scholars have argued that purposeful hunting began with modern man less than 100,000 years ago.

The three spears are carved from 30-year-old spruce trees. They are up to 2.3m (7ft 6in) long, but less than two inches in diameter. The points are cut from the denser and

harder timber at the root end.

"All three spears were manufactured to the same pattern with the maximum weight at the pointed end. The tails taper and in all respects they resemble modern javelins," Dr Hartmut Thieme, an archaeologist based in Hannover, reports in *Nature*. Dr Robin Dennell of Sheffield University said the finds would be "sensational" if they were only 3,000 years old. "Once a hundred times older are almost unimaginable."

The spears were found at Schöningen, near Helmstedt, familiar until 1990 as a frontier crossing from West to East Germany. The opencast coal mine cuts through a series of ancient river chan-



Schöningen spears found here

nels, where damp deposits have preserved thousands of wood and bone fragments.

In one small area there are more than 10,000 pieces of bone, mainly from horses, and bearing marks of butchery. Many flint tools were found with them, including points for cutting and scrapers for cleaning skins. Other finds at the Schöningen site

include fir branches with grooves cut into them, apparently to hold stone blades. Such composite tools possess both sharpness and resilience and can be repaired easily if a blade or shaft breaks.

Composite tools have been dated to the end of the Ice Age, some 15,000 years ago. The Schöningen finds are much older — "the oldest composite tools in the world", according to Dr Thieme. Animal bones found with them include those of extinct species of elephant, rhinoceros and bear, as well as horse and red deer.

The spear-makers of Schöningen were clearly hunters, Dr Dennell said, and were skilled enough to make superb weapons to use in their quest for food. "The

Schöningen spears provide unambiguous evidence that large animals were killed in this manner," Dr Dennell said, pointing out that such heavy weapons would probably have been used by powerful built individuals.

Such evidence might help to explain man's first moves into Europe out of Africa, perhaps a million years ago. "Winter survival would have been hard, given the limited daylight hours in which to locate, kill and process large animals," Dr Dennell said. "Efficient hunting technology reliant on throwing spears might have been the key to survival: 'You are what you throw' may have been as apt as the old adage, 'You are what you eat'."

Until now, the oldest com-

plete spear known was from Saxony. Found in 1948 and made of yew wood, it is a mere 125,000 years old. The most ancient wooden weapon of all, however, is British. The sharpened front portion of a spear was discovered in 1911 near Clacton, Essex. It dates to an earlier glacial stage than the new finds from Germany, perhaps as much as 450,000 years ago, but is too short to be firmly identified as either a stabbing spear or a javelin.

The unfashionability of man-as-hunter in recent years led to the Clacton find being labelled as a digging stick for grubbing up roots, or even a snow probe for finding carcasses in the Ice Age winter. The spears of Schöningen may bring the bloodlust back to British prehistory.



£30m screen test for Rupert, 76

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

RUPERT BEAR, the 76-year-old comic-strip character, is bidding to appear in a full-length cartoon film.

A consortium of British animators, together with Gerry Anderson, the creator of the television series *Thunderbirds*, has applied for a £30 million lottery grant from the Arts Council to make the first cinema feature about Britain's longest-running strip cartoon. Tom Parkhouse, of the animation company Martin Gates Productions and a member of the consortium, United Animation, said: "We thought it would be a great way to showcase British talent."

Rupert was created for the



Tourtel: created the character in 1920

Daily Express in 1920 by Mary Tourtel, whose husband was the paper's news editor. The television and film rights to the comic strip are owned by the animation

company Nelvana, also a member of the consortium. The first two of the most recent television series of *Rupert Bear* were shown on ITV last May and June. The third series starts today.

If its lottery bid is successful, the consortium also plans to make animated feature-film versions of the Brothers Grimm fairy tale *Rumpelstiltskin* and a computer-animated version of *Odysseus, the Legend*.

The Arts Council is offering up to £156 million of lottery cash to British film-makers. The money will be split between four projects. The Arts Council will be an equity partner in any films made and will get a share of any profits. United Animation would

use the grant to set up a British animation studio designed to take on American giants such as Disney. Although the consortium would never be able to compete with Disney funding — its budgets, up to £6 million, would be a fraction of what Disney spends — it would be competitive in terms of quality, Mr Parkhouse said.

"There is a lot of good British animation talent, but not much of it gets on to our screens because we cannot always raise the money."

Some of the country's most successful production houses will also apply for grants, including Working Title, responsible for *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

Arts, pages 36 & 37



Rupert: first appeared in the *Daily Express*

Thieves take three bites of Lord Kingsdown's cherries

LORD KINGSDOWN, the former Governor of the Bank of England, offered a reward of £2,000 yesterday after more than 750 newly planted cherry trees were stolen from his estate in Kent.

In three separate incidents this month, thieves have stolen more than a third of the 2,000 new trees in orchards at Torry Hill near Sittingbourne, farmed by Lord Kingsdown's son, John Leigh-Pemberton. The trees, valued at £3,800, were taken despite being painted luminescent green to deter thieves.

On February 4, 280 trees were taken, followed by 160 a fortnight later. Yesterday 334 more trees were found to have

been stolen. Among the varieties taken were Sunburst and Merchant, grown on colt dwarfing stocks.

Police believe that a gang, possibly using a red four-wheel-drive truck, is responsible and that the trees were stolen to order. Lord Kingsdown, who as Robin Leigh-Pemberton was Governor of the Bank of England from 1983 to 1993, said: "Cherries are a very popular crop right now, but you don't expect people to steal an orchard."

"It is actually a disaster because the trees are irreplaceable. Because so many people are planting cherries at the moment you simply can't buy them from the nurseries."

Lord Kingsdown, who is Lord Lieutenant of Kent, added that he believed the thieves planned to plant an orchard of their own.

Lord Kingsdown's estate has been a prime spot for cherry growing since Roman times. A growing market for English cherries among consumers bored by often bland fruit from abroad has led to a resurgence of planting.

The replanting, which is set to double the English cherry crop within five years, follows decades in the doldrums for the English cherry, which went into decline in the late 1950s as farmers began grubbing their orchards and switching to alternative crops.

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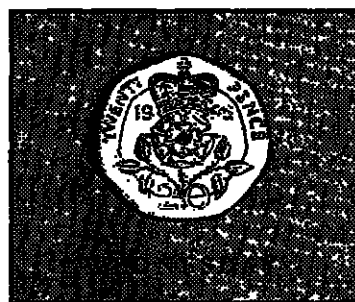
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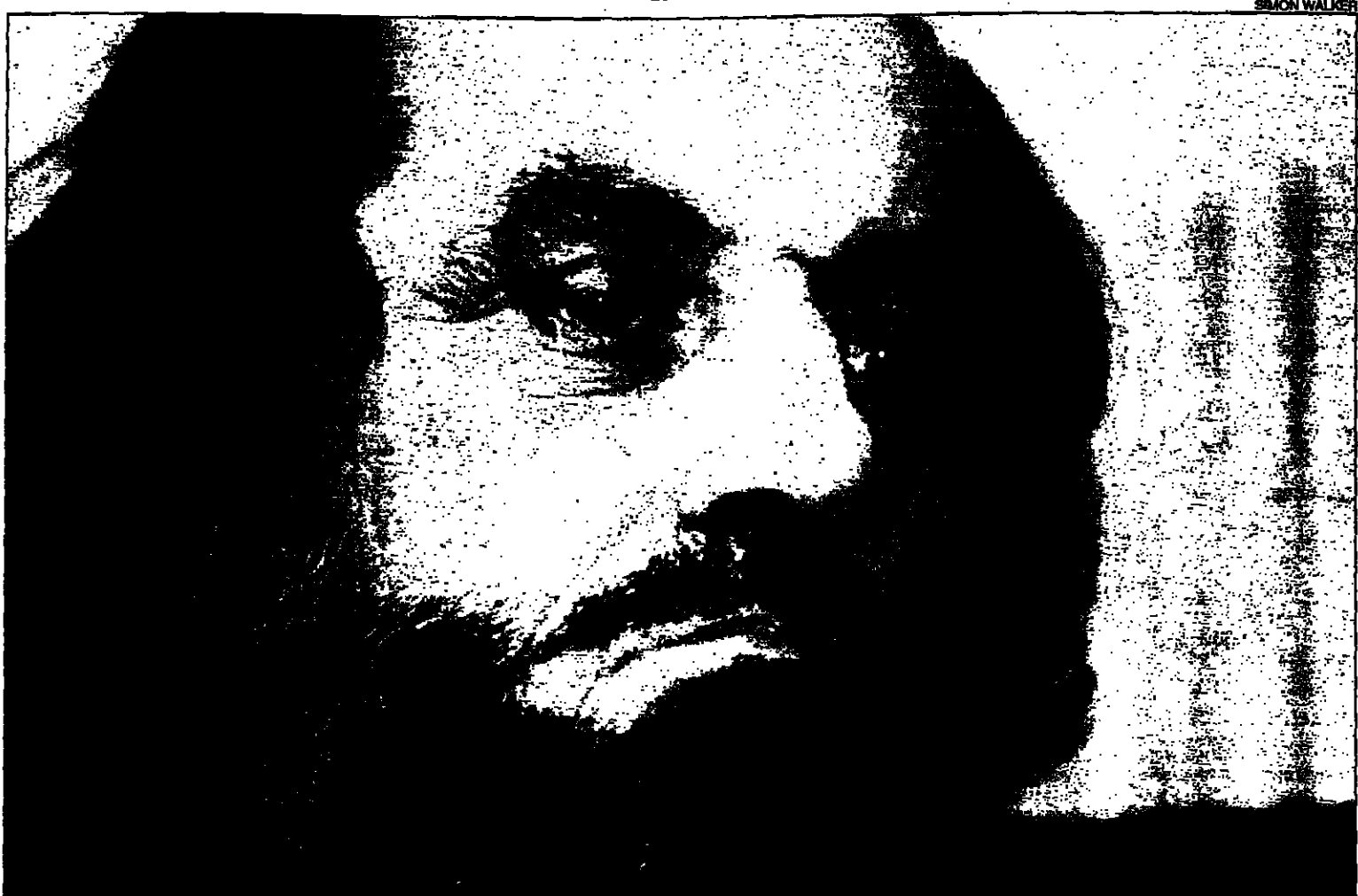
Serbian coalition chief seeks monarchy

By Denis Taylor and Dossa Trevisan

VUK DRASKOVIC, President Milosevic's chief opponent, yesterday called for a constitutional monarchy in Serbia. He praised the King of Spain as a role model and said that if he were elected President of Serbia later this year he would restore citizenship and property rights to Crown Prince Alexander, who lives in exile in London.

Mr Draskovic, who is on a visit to Britain with the other leaders of the Zajedno (Together) coalition, said he could not promise a monarchy to Serbia, and it would be for the Crown Prince to argue his own case. However, "if the people of Serbia decide in a referendum to restore constitutional monarchy, it will be my wish. Serbia needs a Serbian Juan Carlos."

He favoured a monarchy because everything that had happened in the former Yugoslavia since the monarchy was overthrown in 1941 was "shameful", unlike the period before the Second World War. "I will reduce the power of the head of state because we have no government. We have rule by one man." The power must be with the government and parliament. Asked if it had been a tactical error to call off the



Vuk Draskovic, the leader of the Serbian opposition coalition, Zajedno, photographed yesterday during an interview in London

mass demonstrations which recently forced Mr Milosevic to recognise Zajedno election victories, Mr Draskovic said: "We are in power in Belgrade, all the other university centres in Serbia and the main cities settled by two-thirds of the population. But I'm now very, very careful

because in opposition you can promise anything without any obligation." Mr Draskovic said he feared that Mr Milosevic would try to starve the Opposition of funds to discredit its performance in the city halls. If this happened, "we would have to go immediately on

the streets". Rejecting charges that the coalition leaders were divided, Mr Draskovic said it had been agreed that his own party, the Serbian Renewal Movement, would put forward the presidential candidate in elections due in November. The imposing Mr Draskovic, a writer whose

rhetoric has fuelled the biggest protests since Mr Milosevic came to power, will automatically be seen as the Zajedno candidate.

"We have had differences in the past because the Serbian Renewal Movement was against the war," he said. He had organised rallies protest-

ing against the Serb shelling of Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital. However, the parties led by himself, Zoran Djindjic and Vesna Pesic had agreed on a raft of common policies and which party should put forward candidates for Prime Minister, parliamentary Speaker and President.

Lufthansa pilots set course for strike over falling pay

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

LUFTHANSA, the German airline, edged closer yesterday to a pilots' strike that could paralyse much of Europe's air traffic.

The pilots' support for their union leaders, pressing for more money and a one-year wage agreement, underlines the uneasiness within the company as it gears up for full privatisation this year.

The threatened industrial action also reflects the spreading discontent among the German middle and professional classes, who see their real incomes being chipped away and their job security disappearing as a result of the Government's plans to overhaul the welfare state. More than 1,000 surgeries closed in the Heidelberg area yesterday as doctors, waving banners and stethoscopes, marched through the university city to protest against health cuts. But the pilots' action — if it does come to a strike — would be one of the most serious blows to Germany's image.

DAG, the German white-collar union, said 87 per cent of the airline's 3,400 pilots who are union members had voted for a strike ballot. However, flight attendants and ground crew seemed less militant, and the union failed to secure a quorum for a positive vote on future strike action.

That, in part, demonstrates a greater fear than the pilots of losing their jobs. Lufthansa has argued that the strike could put the company in jeopardy and that workers should consider themselves fortunate to have jobs at times of record unemployment.

The Lufthansa management offer, rejected by the DAG, is in line with a deal struck with the OTV public sector union, which represents mainly ground crew. It accepted a 27-month deal, offering a 1.8 per cent wage increase in 1998 and a one-off payment of a third of a month's salary. A DM450 (£190) profits-related bonus was also agreed.

However, 50 per cent of construction companies in western Germany and 40 per cent in the east were reckoning with more job cuts.

trying to push down staff costs since last year. After a drop in profitability, he told workers: "If we do not want to make losses again, we have to do something about our personnel costs. Otherwise I can calculate right now when we go bust, at what ticket price."

The company has launched a programme to cut DM1.5 billion in costs. Unprofitable routes have been handed over to partner airlines who use the name and logistics of Lufthansa but who employ their own staff, pilots and flight attendants, who are now bound by Lufthansa's wage agreements. In the eyes of the unions, this has put many Lufthansa jobs in jeopardy. Even if the pilots are not backed by the flight attendants, they are capable of causing havoc in the international airline system.

According to DAG, pilots of Lufthansa's partner carriers including United Airlines, South African Airways and Thai Airways — have agreed not to cross picket lines.

A few Lufthansa pilots are not DAG members, but there are not enough to keep the airline flying. Even relatively modest protests by pilots in November and December caused serious disruption in German airports and cost the airline about DM30 million.

The negotiations with Lufthansa are expected to continue, though union representatives seem to have gained a new hard bargaining edge in the dispute.

Recovery signs: The Munich-based IFO research institute, in its latest survey of the business climate, said yesterday it had detected the first signs of recovering confidence among German industrial companies.

Militant matadors fight to shave bull by horns

FROM TUNIKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

SPAIN'S bullfighting season, due to start next week in the eastern coastal city of Castellón, came under serious threat yesterday after the sport's main professional association called an indefinite strike in pursuit of a thinly disguised "cheat's charter".

The Confederación de Asociaciones Profesionales Taurinas — which includes most bull breeders, bullfighters, managers and bullfight organisers — has threatened the 1997 season with "total collapse" if the Interior Ministry does not accede to demands that would make it more difficult to detect bulls that have been doctored.

Spanish bullfighting is now plagued by toros *afectados* (shaved bulls) — the blunting of a bull's horns to make it less dangerous. The practice is so widespread that there is scarcely a fighting bull in Spain that has escaped.

Yet, to try to deter testing, the association is demanding there should be a rigorous series of medical checks on each bull after death, or none at all. A spokesman said: "Our honour demands that the tests on horns be as comprehensive as possible. A crude 'look and feel' approach is simply not acceptable."

The proposed tests, which the ministry has rejected as "impracticable", include examinations by veterinary surgeons, histologists, lay experts "approved" by the association and time-consuming laboratory studies. Observers calculate it would take at least a week to test each bull, at an estimated cost of £2,500 a horn. Hundreds die in the course of a season, and a complex test on each would not be feasible.

According to Joaquín Vidal, the taurine critic of the newspaper *El País*, the bullfighting association's demands have one "shameless" aim. "Under the guise of a more rigorous examination, they want to make the detection of shaved horns impossible. Frankly, the demands are ludicrous."

Señor Vidal, a passionate purist and the *bête noire* of Spain's bullfighting establishment, declares that "everyone is in on the corruption... breeders, matadors, bullfighting owners, the lot". He says: "All you need to do to tell whether a bull has been shaved is to look at its horns. They are crudely sawn off at the tips, filed to a false point, and then painted over to hide all traces of tampering."

Critics say having its horns sawn off can traumatise a bull, the act being done routinely by untrained farmhands.

Docile animals with an impaired sense of direction suit today's bullfighters. Wealthy celebrities, they are not so inclined to risk injuries.

Paris threatens to whittle down Strasbourg role

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

PARIS threatened yesterday to cut the European Parliament down to size amid an exchange of insults over the right of the Strasbourg assembly to criticise France's new laws aimed at curbing illegal immigration.

The dispute, which has been simmering since a vote by the European Parliament last week, reached a climax when José-Maria Gil Robles, the new Spanish president of the Parliament, cancelled a meeting yesterday with Hervé de Charette, the French Foreign Minister. Señor Gil Robles said he was indignant over France's "insulting" attitude to the Parliament's vote urging France to reverse the new immigration law, which,

though publicly popular, is being fought in a spectacular campaign by celebrities and intellectuals. Señor Gil Robles was especially irked by M de Charette's comment that "the European Parliament is not yet a parliament worthy of the name". This was "an unacceptable judgment on the role of the European Parliament, its role and its dignity" said the president of the Parliament.

M de Charette compounded the insult, however, by telling the French parliament that he would take up the matter of the Strasbourg assembly's powers at the next session of the inter-governmental conference, which is revamping the institutions of the European Union. It was "especially shocking to see the European Parliament sticking its nose into the national legislative process," he said. If it wanted a bigger role in Europe, it would have to mend its ways.

Earlier this week President Chirac rebuked Señor Gil Robles, who is on his first tour of European capitals, for letting his assembly indulge in "unacceptable interference" in French matters. Although committed to deeper European integration as part of the Maastricht treaty review, France's Gaullist leadership is opposed to any enlargement of the European Parliament's powers.



Gil Robles "insulted" by French comments

Anti-EU case faces delay

Copenhagen: Procedural matters could delay the start in May of a High Court suit by the non-partisan Constitution Committee, a group of ten Danes challenging the legality of Denmark's membership of the European Union (Christopher Follett writes).

In the latest development in the complex preliminary procedural run-up to the case, the date for the final submission of the group's deposition has been postponed from this week to March 6.

In November the group received a setback when court authorities turned down its request to have confidential government documents admitted in evidence. The rebuttal followed a preliminary High Court hearing to set the boundaries for a legal challenge.

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Leading article, page 19

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Cabinet braced for shake-up as Yeltsin reasserts his power

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

THE Russian Government braced itself for a major reshuffle yesterday amid rumours that Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, could be ousted as President Yeltsin takes steps to reassert his grip on the country after months of illness.

Two liberal Moscow newspapers reported yesterday that the President was planning to dismiss Mr Chernomyrdin, 58, who has headed the Government for the past four years. "The political decision on Chernomyrdin's dismissal has already been taken," *Izvestia* announced in a front-page article, quoting a "well-informed source" from within the Prime Minister's circle.

Moskovskiy Novosti, a weekly newspaper, said that Mr Chernomyrdin would be made a scapegoat for the country's continuing economic woes. It also cited his perceived closeness to a number of leading Communists and nationalists as a reason for his removal.

Mr Yeltsin delivered a public dressing-down to his Prime Minister on television on Monday. The President said there needed to be a government shake-up because of its continued failure to pay public-sector wages and pensions on time. Many working at state enterprises have not been paid for months, while others have been given produce from their factories in lieu of wages.

"Many Russians are dissatisfied with the Government, its chairman [Prime Minister] and accordingly the

President," Mr Yeltsin declared to an extremely uncomfortable-looking Mr Chernomyrdin. "And such people are already in the majority."

Mr Chernomyrdin made plain yesterday, however, that he had no intention of stepping down, saying he would reshuffle his Cabinet and step up economic reform. "We are preparing changes and I can say that they will not be merely cosmetic," he said.

Further criticism of the Prime Minister has come from his predecessor, Yegor Gaidar, the radical reformer who presided over the early stages of Russia's transition to a market economy and the accompanying hyper-inflation.

Mr Gaidar was replaced by the more stolid Mr Chernomyrdin in December 1992 — a move seen then as applying a brake to the reform process. In the event, Mr Chernomyrdin pursued much the same line

as his predecessor, who more than once accused him of hijacking his policies. Last week Mr Gaidar launched a fresh attack, accusing the Prime Minister of pushing the country into crisis.

Ministers have blamed large-scale tax evasion for their inability to pay wages on time, but they have shown decidedly little commitment to tackling the problem. If, as seems likely, Mr Chernomyrdin survives for the time being at least, those looking most vulnerable are Aleksandr Lyshits, the Finance Minister, who bears direct responsibility for the payment of wages and pensions, and Yevgeniy Yasin, the Economy Minister.

Even if these and other figures should fall, there seems little likelihood of Russia's economic problems being solved overnight. The main purpose of such a move would be to persuade the nation that Mr Yeltsin is firmly back in control.

□ Bodyguards fired: President Yeltsin has sacked his photographer, who chronicled his life for ten years, along with a dozen members of his security service.

The Russian leader's move came after Dmitri Sokolov, the photographer, and other members of Mr Yeltsin's inner circle had a loud Kremlin party to celebrate the landslide parliamentary election victory of Aleksandr Korzhakov, the former head of Mr Yeltsin's security service, the daily *Moskovsky Komsomolets* reported. (AP)



Chernomyrdin: public humiliation on TV



Doherty: rearguard action in Hong Kong

RAF man picked for historic footnote

BY ALAN HAMILTON

MORE than a century and a half of British military presence in Hong Kong ends at midnight on June 30 when the Union Flag is replaced by that of the People's Republic of China. But the actual handover will be when Lee Doherty's feet leave the ground.

Squadron Leader Doherty, an RAF movements officer from Bath, has won the honour of being the last man out, ending the British involvement that began when the Royal Navy planted the flag in 1841 to claim the harbour for the opium trade. But he will not be required to switch off the lights.

He will have to ensure that the final straggling rearguard has gathered its belongings and is off the premises within two hours of the midnight handover, before thousands of troops from the People's Liberation Army pour over the border to occupy the 14 former British military bases in the colony.

"It seems strange that the



The 1st Battalion The Black Watch march yesterday for a visit by Michael Portillo

RAF should be the last to leave, but perhaps that is how it should be, as we are leaving from an airport." Squadron Leader Doherty, 32, said in Hong Kong yesterday.

The "clean break" withdrawal will be a precise and carefully planned operation, as on that night Hong Kong will be thronged with massive crowds celebrating the hand-

over. It begins in May, when the 5,500-ton Royal Navy ship *Sir Percival* will arrive to remove heavy equipment, including ammunition, and the official cars of Chris Patten, the Governor, and Major-General Bryan Dutton, the garrison commander.

On the night itself, a spectacular ceremony is planned on a new waterfront parade ground with the pipes and drums of The Black Watch, and the bands of the Scots Guards, Gurkhas and the Royal Marines.

At midnight, a lone piper will play a lament as the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, carrying the Prince of Wales and government ministers, casts off to close another chapter of empire.

Massacre rumours mar talks on Zaire

BY SAM KILEY
AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

BELGIUM launched investigations yesterday into reports of widespread killings and mass graves in eastern Zaire as Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, began talks with South African diplomats.

A Belgian Foreign Ministry spokesman said: "We are very concerned about human rights violations in territory in eastern Zaire."

Earlier, Reginald Moreels, the Belgian Defence Minister, told a newspaper that he had received reports from witnesses of fresh "genocide" in rebel-held territory in eastern Zaire. The Foreign Ministry declined to use the term.

The rainforests and mountains of eastern Zaire have been sheltering up to 200,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees who fled advancing rebels from their camps in November last year. France and Belgium have been anxious to highlight the plight of the refugees and Amnesty International has repeatedly claimed that they have been murdered by the Tutsi-dominated rebels in North and South Kivu provinces.

The rebels were identified as being behind a massacre of about 500 civilian Hutus in a camp near Bukavu, and in smaller-scale executions in Mugunga camp near Goma last year. But no credible evidence has emerged that these were part of a systematic campaign to murder Hutu civilians or Zairean peasants.

In penetrating deep into the Masisi region, close on the heels of the advancing rebels, I came across the site of a massacre of about 500 Zairean civilians at the end of November last year. Survivors said that they had been wiped out by Hutu militiamen, who were behind the genocide of a million Tutsis and Hutu moderates in Rwanda three years ago.

Talks with the rebels advanced significantly yesterday when Mr Kabila met Azz Pahad, the South African Deputy Foreign Minister.

Yesterday the Zairean Army appeared to be on the verge of abandoning the garrison of Kindu. Aid agency sources said the rebels were less than 15 miles away.

Challenge for Jiang as bombs kill five on Muslim city's buses

FROM JAMES FRINGLE
IN BEIJING

A HEAVY security clampdown took place in Urumqi, capital of the Chinese far-western region of Xinjiang, yesterday after three bombs went off in buses on Tuesday evening, killing five people, injuring 60 and marring the last of six days of official mourning for Deng Xiaoping.

The bombs were believed to have

been set off by Muslim separatists of the Uighur minority, although one has claimed responsibility. There have been no arrests.

The attacks present Jiang Zemin, China's new President with an early threat of instability. "The whole emphasis of the Government is on stability and avoiding disorder, but he has been presented with an immediate challenge that was deliberately made to coincide with Deng's memorial rites," said one

Western envoy. The three time-bombs, planted on rush-hour buses, blew up in rapid succession in the Muslim city. Residents said yesterday that police were patrolling streets and checking suspicious bags and packages. "People are full of fear, and the city is on high alert," said one television station official. People were avoiding buses.

Xinjiang, a region Muslim separatists call East Turkestan which borders Afghanistan, Pakistan and

three Muslim former Soviet republics, saw anti-Chinese riots in Yining on February 5 and 6, over Chinese New Year. Nine people died.

Chinese leaders have expressed concern over the threat from Islamic fundamentalism. David Levy, the visiting Israeli Foreign Minister, said here: Mr Levy said he thought Israel and China held "a very similar view" on the subject.

"Every attempt to turn religion

into a weapon becomes extremely dangerous, as it is something that knows no boundaries," he said. "Like sand, it can be transported by the wind from one place to another."

Meanwhile, Mr Jiang lost no time yesterday in asserting his authority as Deng's chosen successor. A picture of the 70-year-old leader reading the eulogy to China's last revolutionary leader dominated the front page of the *People's Daily*, the party organ, dwarfing a photograph

of Deng. An editorial hailed Mr Jiang as a "loyal, reliable, enterprising and promising successor to the great cause pioneered by Comrade Deng Xiaoping". Mr Jiang had "lived up to the people's great trust and expectations".

Now the rites for Deng, have been completed, Mr Jiang, as party chief, head of state and military commander-in-chief, must stand on his own feet and convince people he is in charge.

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Part of Jackson's bronze monument

London statue for Swedish war hero

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE Queen yesterday unveiled a monument in London commemorating Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved the lives of at least 100,000 Jews in Nazi-occupied Hungary.

Accompanied by President Weizman of Israel, on the second day of his state visit to Britain, the Queen unveiled a 10ft bronze statue by the Sussex-based sculptor Philip Jackson, backed by a wall representing the Schutzgasse — the false papers issued by Wallenberg from his Budapest legation which enabled Hungarian Jews to escape a certain fate in the death camps.

At the insistence of surviving members of Wallenberg's family in Sweden, the statue is being described as a monument rather than a memorial, as they claim that there is no firm evidence for the generally accepted theory that Wallenberg fell into the hands of the Soviet Army in 1945 and perished in the gulags.

But the report of a joint Swedish-Russian investigation into Wallenberg's fate, is expected to say that the diplomat was executed in 1947 on the orders of Nikolai Bulganin, then a relatively minor Soviet Communist Party official who rose to be General Secretary, and that a subsequent party secretary, Georgi Malenkov, ordered a cover-up of his death.

Israeli President rejects pardon for 'traitor' Vanunu

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

PRESIDENT WEIZMAN of Israel yesterday ruled out any possibility of pardoning Mordechai Vanunu, saying the former nuclear technician was a spy who had damaged his country's security.

Curly brushing aside suggestions that he might recommend clemency or end Vanunu's solitary confinement, he said: "I don't think he deserves it. He was a spy who gave away secrets, and the fact that he did so from conviction rather than for money made no difference."

Mr Weizman, speaking on the second day of his state visit to Britain, said Vanunu, who had given details of Israel's nuclear installations to *The Sunday Times*, had been properly sentenced by Israeli courts for doing something he was not supposed to do. "I don't know why you are so

worried about it," he told a press conference. "He was a traitor to his country."

Mr Weizman's combative remarks introduced an unusually polemical note in what is normally more of a symbolic than a political occasion. Demonstrators outside held up posters calling for Vanunu's release.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, rebuked the Israeli Government for going ahead with a housing project in Arab east Jerusalem. He said he was "extremely disturbed" to hear that the Israelis were going ahead with a settlement at Har Homa. "All settlement building in occupied territory is against international law, and particularly in the sensitive case of Jerusalem," he said. It risked damaging the peace process by preempting final status talks. In a

note of exasperation that contrasted sharply with the Queen's official welcome to the Israeli President at Buckingham Palace, he added: "We have urged the Israeli Government not to proceed with these plans. They can only detract from the positive atmosphere created by the Hebron agreement and undermine the establishment of trust vital to the successful negotiation of final status issues with the Palestinians." He hoped that the Israeli authorities would take account of the views of "their friends abroad".

Mr Weizman defended Israel's decision to go ahead with the project, saying that it was not a settlement but a compromise that would benefit both Jews and Arabs.

He appealed to the Palestinians not to break off talks, saying they would be "crazy" to jeopardise all they had achieved so far. He praised Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, and his colleagues as "good men", who had achieved more for their people than any Palestinians before. He was convinced that Israel would reach full understanding with the Palestinians at final status talks.

He admitted that Mr Arafat had the right to be "extremely angry and voice his opinion" about the project. He should, however, then carry on negotiating. Mr Weizman would not directly endorse the decision by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, but said it was "not a decisive factor" in the peace process. He refused to answer questions about Mr Netanyahu's political position, saying that the Prime Minister had been democratically elected.

Mr Weizman was equally blunt about Jews outside Israel. Beyond that, they should keep out of Israeli politics. "We have had our bar mitzvah in Israel," he said, pointing out that the state had now existed for 49 years, and had established itself with all its own institutions and government. Mr Weizman added: "We are looking after ourselves."

Security alert over 'echoes of intifada'

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI tanks and snipers were on standby in the occupied West Bank last night after the Government opted to go ahead with a massive Jewish housing project in east Jerusalem in the face of warnings of violent Palestinian reaction.

The green light to build homes for more than 20,000 Jewish settlers at Har Homa, a hillside strategically sited southeast of Jerusalem, was taken by a ministerial committee chaired by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, in the teeth of criticism from the West and the Arab world. Israeli officials said they expected bulldozers to start work in about two weeks.

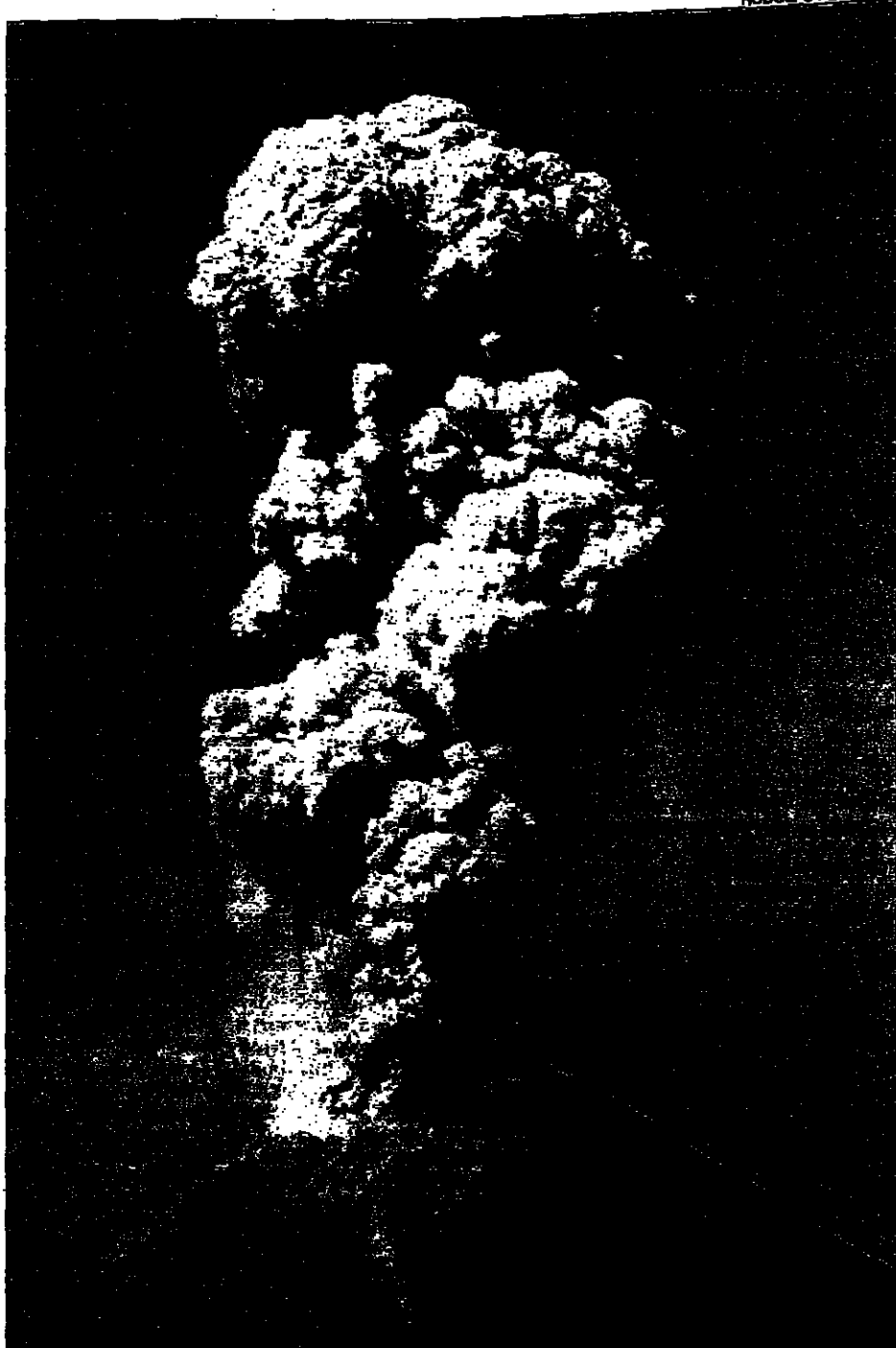
Avigdor Kahalani, the Interior Security Minister, said: "There are scenarios that there will be riots and possibly the opening of fire — we are not naive."

Right-wingers called for a tough approach in the event of Palestinian violence, which

left-wing Israeli politicians predicted could be worse than those last September after the opening of a tunnel, near sites holy to Muslims, Jews and Christians, which left 76 people dead and 1,500 wounded.

Writing in *The Jerusalem Post*, Ephraim Inbar, the director of the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies, called for the bombing of the new Palestinian airfield in Gaza and the reconquest of territory recently handed back by Israel if there were Palestinian riots against the new project. An opinion poll showed 58 per cent of Israeli Jews in favour of building at Har Homa, known to Arabs as Jabal Abu Ghneim.

Faisal Hussein, the top Palestine Liberation Organisation official in Jerusalem, said that tension in the city reminded him of the days leading up to the six-year Palestinian intifada, which began in December 1987.



A plume of ash and steam rises from Popocatepetl volcano, 55 miles southeast of Mexico City, in what officials dismissed as a harmless display of activity

Whisky-loving warlord defies Taleban tide

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN MAZAR-I-SHARIF

THE main obstacle to Taleban's attempt to conquer all of Afghanistan is a burly man with eight children, a black bullet-proof Cadillac, a ready laugh and a fondness for the best Scotch.

General Abdul Rashid Dostum, from a peasant family, looks out of place in his expensively furnished office in a century-old fort near Mazar-i-Sharif. This is the heart of the northern Afghanistan war machine, where strategies to fend off the extremist Islamic invaders are plotted. Running big hands over his greying, crewcut hair, he looks worried.

Dostum is a nickname the general earned as a young man — *dost* means friend, and a *dostum* is everybody's friend. He is a product of the Soviet Union, one of the declared reasons for Taleban's hatred of him. The former Communist rose through the ranks of the Soviet-backed army led by President Najibullah, who was tortured to death by Taleban five months ago after he captured Kabul, the capital.

A similar fate awaits General Dostum, 42, if Taleban catches him. He loathes its extreme form of Islam as much as Taleban loathes his liberalism. The security around him is intense: the

Cadillac, flown from Germany three years ago after being armoured, is an incongruous sight at the Mogul-style Qala-i-Jangi (Fort of War), his military headquarters.

His first wife died and he has remarried. His last child was born just over a week ago in Shibarghan, a small town 50 miles away, where he lives in an ancient fort protected by missiles, tanks, artillery and many soldiers. Without him, northern Afghanistan would soon succumb to Taleban's challenge: he is thus revered, at least by fellow Uzbeks, who comprise 40 per cent of the northern population.

General Dostum had only a

few years' schooling and essentially taught himself to read and write. Apart from his native Uzbek he speaks Pashto and — imperfectly — Russian and Russian. He is now preoccupied as Taleban forces approach his borders. General Dostum controls six provinces along the borders of the Central Asian states; in Mazar-i-Sharif large portraits of him look down on dusty streets filled with donkey carts, bicycles and decrepit Russian-made Volga taxis. The big Pajero jeeps roaring around town belong to his commanders, who are resented for their opulent lifestyles.

He runs what amounts to a mini-state, which even boasts its own airline, Baulk Air. He listed his achievements: "Thousands of people have been given electricity by me. Thousands of families have been given cash by me. I have constructed madrasahs (Islamic schools) and mosques for people to study the Koran. I have given land to many people. More than 95 per cent of the people support me; otherwise I would not be able to stay in this position."

Then the strongman of the north, who hates being called a warlord (which is what he is), strode back to his desk and belted into the telephone. War beckoned.



Dostum: revered by his fellow Uzbeks

Plea by apartheid minister

Johannesburg: Adriaan Vlok, the former South African Police Minister, has applied to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for amnesty, his lawyer said yesterday, making him the first member of the apartheid-era Cabinet ready to admit to abuses.

Mr Vlok headed the police at the height of emergency rule in the 1980s when hundreds of black activists were killed by police and about 30,000 people detained without charge amid allegations of torture in jails. (Reuters)

Guards killed at Punjab bank

Lahore: Five police constables were killed while guarding a National Bank of Pakistan branch in Punjab province. They were found with their throats slit in Daska, 80 miles from here. Tools and a gas cylinder were found outside the strongroom, which the robbers failed to break open. The killings raised security fears in a state where sectarian attacks have cost more than 50 lives this year. (AFP)

Kenyan students step up protest

Nairobi: About 3,000 Kenyan students marched through the capital for a fourth day to protest at the death of Solomon Muruli, 23, a student leader. His charred body was found in a university hostel on Sunday and students have blamed police. Despite protests from Western embassies, rights activists and the opposition, police say they are not treating his death as murder.

US superspy plane crashes

Washington: The Predator, one of the Pentagon's most advanced, unmanned spy planes, crashed while taking off on a test flight in California. The cause of the accident is not yet known. The 27ft-long aircraft, controlled from the ground, is designed to transmit images of enemy troop and weapons movements via satellite.

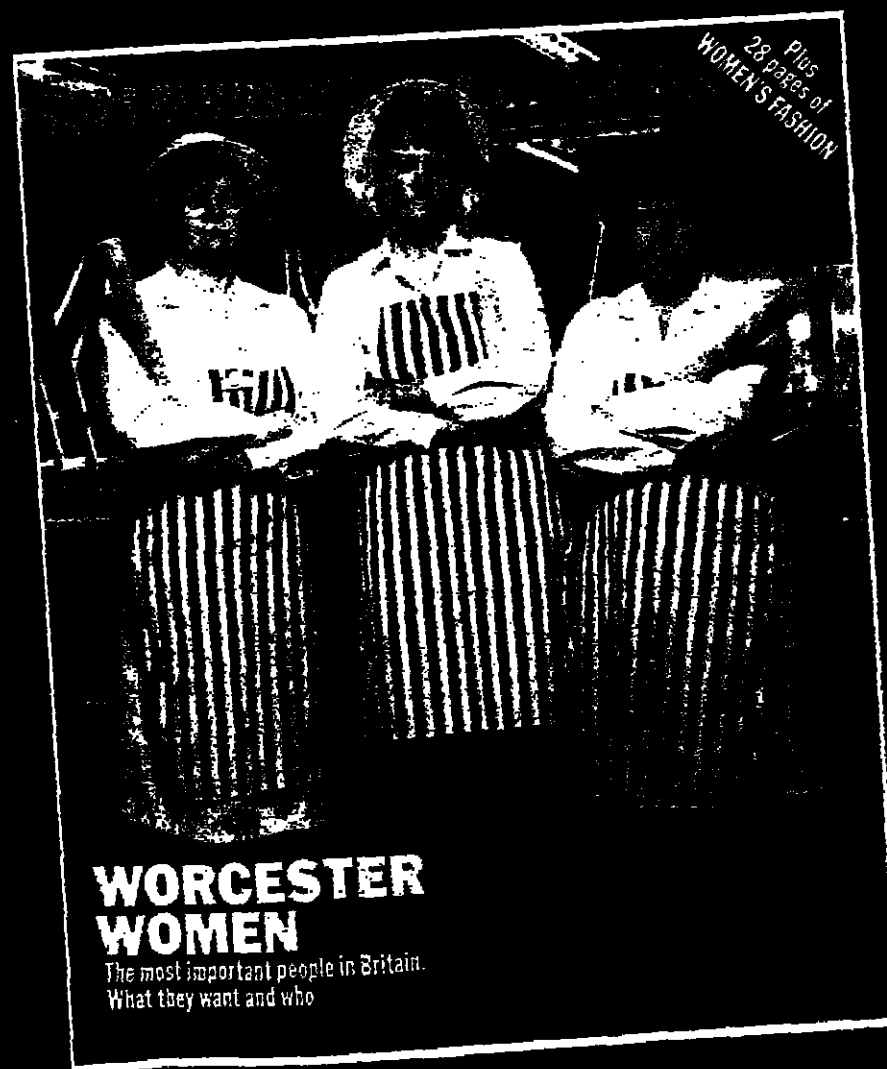
Defence chief's brother quizzed

Brewer, Maine: The brother of William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, is under investigation after an overnight shooting incident, police said. Officials said Robert Cohen shot and wounded a man who entered his home, but no charges have been filed so far. (Reuters)

Work-shy son shot in bed

Paris: A woman in Marseilles has been accused of shooting her 18-year-old son in the head with a rifle when he refused to get out of bed and go to work (Susan Bell writes). Sylvie Gomez, 40, allegedly shot her son, Frédéric, with a .22 rifle. Police said he was in a "desperate" condition.

THE SUNDAY TIMES



Who are they and how will they vote? Find out this weekend

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Britons to be offered cheap Olympic seats

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

SYDNEY Olympics chiefs are to offer British sports fans a cut-price deal for prime reserved seats at the 2000 Games, at a cost well below that asked of Australians.

It follows the failure of a plan to sell gold passes to Australians, who were asked to pay £5,000 for a guaranteed stadium seat. Only a third of the 35,000 stadium gold-pass seats have been sold, leaving those who backed the scheme with a potential £100,000 shortfall.

Representatives of the Sydney Olympic Organising Committee and the group running the gold-pass project will travel to Britain, the United States and Africa to negotiate the sale of reserved

seats. They will meet Olympic committees in each country.

The move to offer cheap Olympic seats to foreigners is bound to infuriate Australians, many of whom regard sport almost as a religion. Under the scheme, Australian residents wanting a guaranteed seat at the Games have to purchase a three-part gold pass which also gives them a 30-year membership of the stadium and an investment in the building.

But because there have been so few takers for the triple package, the International Olympic Committee has agreed to allow the sale of the Games tickets on their own, though only to overseas buyers.

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Dr Thomas Stuttaford on the confusion between food and diet; anti-rheumatic drugs and dementia; and an unexpected benefit of HRT



Why there is no such thing as healthy food

The Home Secretary's favourite meal was recently compared with a prisoner's standard lunch. Having studied the menu which might be served in Dartmoor, and that which is prepared when Mr Howard is being given a treat, one might well feel that many people would rather have been eating on the moor.

Institutional food, if well cooked and pleasantly presented (which is probably unlikely in prison), has a certain appeal to all of those who, like myself, started to board at a prep school at six, and didn't have regular home cooking for years. After all that early conditioning, steak and kidney pudding, mashed potatoes and peas, followed by a marmalade or golden syrup steamed pudding, seemed very alluring.

The *Balance of Good Health*, a guide to healthy eating produced by the Department for Education and Employment, is full of sound medical advice. But the best of all is contained in the opening paragraph, which states that there are no healthy, or unhealthy, foods — only healthy or unhealthy diets.

Steak and kidney pudding is, for instance, an excellent food, containing protein, Vitamin E, folic acid and essential fats. It is also rich in calories, but it wouldn't, of course, be very health-giving if served at every mealtime. Likewise, treacle tart may be a firm favourite — but fruit salads can be made just as appetising.

The department's tract emphasises that vegetables do not have to be "fresh" — although no one will deny that they taste better if they are, and contain more vitamins. It is very strict on the amount of fat which we should have in our diet and is anxious to cut this to less than 35 per

cent of the total energy intake. But it says little about olive oil. If our diet is to be modified so as to be more like that which protects the Mediterranean people from coronary heart disease and cancer, we should start to consider what type, as well as how much, fat we should take. Other factors in the Mediterranean diet include more vegetables (five portions a day have been recommended), and more fruit and fruit juices.

Saturated fats are responsible for the cholesterol-raising effects of a rich, fatty diet and make a major contribution to the levels of pernicious low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and the sinister triglycerides in the blood. Many people have a constitution and cardiovascular system which will cope with a northern European diet so that their arteries do not become lethally clogged by atheroma, the fatty deposits which occlude the blood vessels. In a sizeable minority, however, the lifespan is shortened by too



Mediterranean boon: olive oil

great an addiction to the frying pan. It is a common mistake to think that all the saturated fats are derived from dairy produce and animal fats. If vegetable oil is derived from palm kernels or coconuts (for instance, in some tinned sardines), it might be just as healthy to have a large helping of beef dripping.

Unsaturated fats include sunflower and other vegetable oils, as well as those derived from soya beans and rape seed. Other unsaturated fats are found in fish. If polyunsaturated or mono-unsaturated are used instead of saturated fats, cholesterol levels are reduced. Fish oils have the advantage of lowering the triglyceride level. A combination of high levels of triglyceride and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol is ominous.

Of all the mono-unsaturated fats, olive oil may well hold the clue to improving the British position in the international league table of coronary heart disease. At the moment we rank second worst of the advanced societies.

The DfE's advice contains a few useful paragraphs on potatoes. The experts would prefer them to be boiled or baked, but if chips must be on the menu, they should be thick rather than thin and straight cut rather than crinkly. Both measures reduce the amount of fat absorbed by the potato.

Fat in which chips have been cooked must be changed frequently and should not be too hot. The use of oven chips reduces the fat content by 40 per cent. It is possible now to buy a spray which delivers a coating of olive oil to the pan and by this means reduces the fat in the chips to a minimum. What is more, it is a minimum which is healthy.

HORMONE replacement therapy is such an important way of preventing death from fractures that follow the weakening of bones in older women, and as a means of reducing the incidence of cardiovascular disease in post-menopausal women, that its other advantages are often overlooked. The American Journal of Epidemiology has recently reported another effect of

HRT helps stop cataracts

hormonal replacement in middle-aged women. Researchers in Australia who have studied the eyes of more than 2,000 women over the age of 50 have discovered that women who take HRT long-term are less likely to develop cataracts. This finding is particularly

important in Australia, which has a high incidence of cataracts. They are related to exposure to sun, particularly when it is reflected off the beach or sea. Sunbathing on a beach, and staring at the sky, is liable to cause trouble with the lenses, as in this position the eyes are no longer protect-

ed by the forehead from the direct rays of the sun. A projecting forehead provides a natural sunshade to protect the eyes.

The Australian research has also revealed that later onset of a woman's periods than is usual is associated with an increased chance of a cataract. Surprisingly, the time of the menopause has no influence on cataract formation.



Iris Murdoch: the novelist has been developing the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease for some time

New hope over Alzheimer's

The arthritic old man or woman who hobbles across the village green before seizing a place in the pub from which they can dominate the conversation has often been admired for the way in which their intellect has survived despite their age. Rheumatologists have long noticed that their patients seem to have less Alzheimer's disease than do those of the doctors treating other people.

The hypothesis that arthritic patients have less Alzheimer's is still no more than a clinical observation, but recently scientists have started to study any possible influence the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, the anti-rheumatic preparations, might have on the disease, and their possible ability to keep this condition at bay.

There are possible scientific explanations which could account for any effect the anti-rheumatic drug might have on Alzheimer's disease. These drugs interfere with various of the body's enzyme

systems, possibly including those found in the brain. Dr Phillip Platt, a consultant rheumatologist and a lecturer at Newcastle University School of Medicine said: "An apparent reduction in the incidence of Alzheimer's disease in patients with arthritis has often been commented upon by rheumatologists, but this is as yet no more than a clinical observation. The important point is that whereas until recently, the very term Alzheimer's induced the feeling of desperation, now at last there seems to be some hope."

Advances in the treatment will come too late for the 600,000 patients in Britain who have already had the disease diagnosed. Their families, however, who have often made huge sacrifices to care for their elderly relatives, or spouses, should be

satisfied that at last strenuous efforts are being made to find answers to the distressing problems which are posed by the disease.

Everyone concerned with Alzheimer's would have welcomed the honest account of the nature of the disease given by Professor John Bayley, a witty and perspicacious Oxford scholar. Professor Bayley has been looking after his wife, Iris Murdoch, the writer who has been developing the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's for some time. She is now dependent on her husband.

This week the Duke of Edinburgh spoke to an invited audience about the need for more research into the disease. Alzheimer's is like many diseases affecting the mind, a poor relation in terms of money spent on its research. Only £10 per

patient per year is spent on its research, whereas £109 goes to every patient with heart disease, £474 per patient for the investigation of the causes of cancer, and a remarkable £15,000 for everyone who has AIDS.

The thought that a brilliant mind, like that of Iris Murdoch, can be reduced to childlike, must make others, as well as Prince Philip, wonder about the shortage of resources for research.

A new research institute is to be built in Cambridge, but a further £2 million is needed before work can start on the building. Prince Philip's appeal was directed to this project for which funds are urgently needed.

The good news for those whose memory is beginning to fail is that Aricept has now been licensed for use in this country. Aricept won't cure Alzheimer's but it will boost the memory of about a third of cases for a time. We still need the Cambridge project to find the cause so that the disease can be prevented.

It's a poor relation in terms of money spent on research

Misdiagnosis can lead to tragedy

DANIEL WHAYMAN, a four-month-old baby, was thrown into the River Orwell at Ipswich by his mother Lisa, who suffers from schizophrenia. Daniel was dropped 150ft over the side of the bridge that spans the river. The tragic case of Daniel and his mother carries many lessons for those who look after patients with schizophrenia. Lisa's illness had apparently been misdiagnosed since she was 14, although even at that age it was realised that she had psychiatric problems. The true diagnosis of schizophrenia was only made after Daniel's murder. There was potentially

lethal reluctance on the part of doctors to make a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Euphemisms to describe the condition abound; as a result the diagnosis itself is often missed.

Doctors feel that before they are in a position to diagnose schizophrenia, therefore — and to prescribe the right treatment and care — they must have evidence of symptoms so distinctive that a third-year student couldn't miss them.

Modern research using sophisticated scanning devices is now beginning to show what GPs have long believed: that in a family with a history of schizophrenia there is often a spectrum of symptoms of varying severity. Some of the family may be obviously schizophrenic, whereas others are no more than charmingly eccentric.

The grim legacy of meningitis

THE height of the meningococcal meningitis season will soon be over, but there can be no lessening of the sense of alertness which is needed to spot the early signs of meningococcal infection so the treatment can be started at once. Although meningitis is more common in the winter, it can occur at any time of the year and whatever the month it has the power to kill a patient within hours of the first signs and symptoms. It is often thought that if the patient survives the first two days after an attack of meningitis, the troubles are over. But this is not so.

Meningococcal infections, whether the symptoms are predominantly related to meningitis — inflammation of the covering of the brain — or to septicaemia which results in a rash, collapse and circulatory failure, often leave a terrible legacy.

Patients who have survived meningococcal septicaemia frequently need to have limbs amputated. If gangrene has developed in a leg or arm as a result of an embolised circulation.

Meningitis may leave behind it a host of residual problems. Recent extensive research published in the archives of diseases of children shows that meningitis induces varying degrees of hearing loss in 10 per cent of the children affected, but only in about 3 per cent is this deafness permanent.

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Peers, politics and the Asian vote

The elevation of two wealthy Asian businessmen to the House of Lords reflects party strategists' recognition of the new-found power of Asian voters



Dominic Kennedy

They were both born in British India in the early 1930s and have just been elevated to the House of Lords. They are Hindus, vegetarians and non-drinkers, who arrived in Britain with little and made fortunes in their adopted land. There the similarity ends.

Swraj Paul is a Labour peer and industrialist, a romantic figure whose family struggled for Indian independence, a friend of the late Indira Gandhi and Earl Mountbatten of Burma. He famously saved London Zoo in honour of a daughter who died as a child. Raj Bagri, chairman of the London Metal Exchange, who the New Year's Honours list made the fifth Asian peer, took his place on the Conservative benches yesterday. The City was stunned by the signing of Bagri's honour so on after the exchange faced acrimony over the Sumitomo per scandal when a rogue trader lost the Japanese company £1.2 billion.

The arrival of two new Asians in the House of Lords provoked a wave of speculation among the inexpressibly snooty UK Indian elite. Lord Paul and Lord Bagri are in different camps. Bagri is a friend of the billionaire Hinduja family, wealthy brothers from Bombay who are regarded as official leaders of the rich Asians in Britain, as well as being donors to the Conservative Party. Bagri's companies have never given money to the Tories but he does have a habit of writing large cheques for uses close to his heart. Paul, who keeps his distance from Hinduja, has given at £139,000 to the Labour Party during the 1990s.

When Tony Blair recommended Paul for a peerage last August, it went round that the Hinduja were upset. "Was it a peerage, as suggested (month) by the newspaper *Day Business*, a gesture by a Major to please the Tory-poring Asians?" Forcing aside, both party leaders are blatantly making a bid for the important one-and-a-half Asian vote at this time. In India last month, Prime Minister was on a sledge to woo, highlighting the Hinduja's entrepreneurial flair



Lord Bagri, the chairman of the London Metal Exchange and a Conservative peer, with his sponsors Baroness Flather and Lord McColl, before yesterday's ceremony receiving him into the Upper House

and hard work of the Asian community. Tony Blair has just paid a high-profile visit to Regent's Park mosque.

To some rich Indians, the choice of Bagri smacks of desperation by a Prime Minister eager to find a top Asian to ennobel in time for the election.

'To some rich Indians, the choice of Bagri smacks of a little of desperation'

Conservative Central Office says: "He is a very popular figure. He is a very prominent businessman. We are very pleased he has decided to sit as a Conservative peer."

Senior Asians say this only shows how out of touch the Tory machine is with the Asian grass roots. If Major wanted a vote-winner, they believe he chose the wrong man.

Sarwar Ahmed, the Editor-in-Chief of the weekly newspaper *Eastern Eye*, who hosted a party to honour Britain's richest 100 Asians in the Café Royal last week, compares Bagri and Paul. "Lord Paul is a very charismatic person who has built up a reputation for being really generous both with money and time," he says.

"Although Bagri is known in the business community, in the wider Asian community nobody would have heard of him until he got the peerage and after that nothing. In

terms of being popular or unpopular, he is never there for anyone to decide. He is just anonymous. That's a bit of a shame because we haven't got very many role models."

The four Hinduja brothers, whose contacts include Baroness Thatcher and Jack Cunningham, run a global trading and finance empire.

They are occasional visitors to Lord Bagri's £8 million Indian villa in Regent's Park. Lord Bagri has been involved in their proposal for an Asian British Bank, as well as their Concordia project which is seeking Millennium Commission money for a multicultural centre in Peterborough.

Lord Bagri is dismissive of the allegations that his honour was arranged by Gopichand Hinduja, one of the brothers, at a dinner with an unnamed senior Cabinet minister last year.

"It is totally and utterly untrue," he said. "I have never talked to Hinduja about any honours for me. I have never asked him to broker anything for me. I am absolutely amazed that this kind of story has been conceived and published."

Although Swraj Paul was publicly congratulated by Gopichand Hinduja when he became a lord, the rumours continued that the family was annoyed. The Hinduja, however, deny this. According to observers, Paul became the new favourite at the High Commission.

Sachind Hinduja, another brother, vigorously denies that Gopichand recommended Bagri for the peerage although he confirmed the brothers meet ministers "for economic developments between India and Britain".

Did the Hinduja family arrange Bagri's honour? G.K. Noon, the Indian chilled foods entrepreneur, describes Bagri



Lord Paul: a Labour peer and an industrialist

as "very friendly with the Hinduja" but says it is rubbish to say they were involved in his peerage.

Nat Paul, the £95 million industrialist, said Bagri and the Hinduja had a good working relationship but he was equally dismissive of the report. "I didn't know peerages were available that way."

Some wealthy Asians do, however, equate donations to the Conservative Party with future honours.

According to Pranlal Sheth,

peer, and Lord McColl of Dulwich, the distinguished surgeon who acts as the Prime Minister's eyes and ears in the Upper House.

Unknown to almost every other lord, it was a conversation between these two senior Tories which led to Bagri being included on a list of suitable candidates for high honour early last year.

Baroness Flather put him down for "at least a knighthood". She has adopted a role of recommending worthy Asians for important public duties.

"You can't get anybody a peerage," she says. "Should one be so lucky to be in that position. You don't buy a peerage either, even if people think you do. You talk to Lord McColl, who is the Prime Minister's liaison person in the Lords. I talk to him and suggest names. I give names for things all the time. Some succeed, some don't succeed. Isn't that one of my functions in the House of Lords? I am a resource."

Lady Flather has long been an admirer of Raj Bagri. He is a member of her £100-a-head Link Club for 50 leading Asians, which has quarterly functions to meet the Prime Minister and other ministers. "He has a CBE," says the baroness, "but I felt that he deserved more."

Certainly, he seemed a worthy candidate to the secretive group of Privy Counsellors who vet all peerages. Raj Bagri rose from being a clerk in a Calcutta metals business to become the first non-white chairman of the prestigious London Metal Exchange, his family fortune now worth an estimated £80 million.

He is a quiet, aesthetic man who likes listening to Indian classical music and attending recitals of Urdu poetry. His huge gifts to charity have

always been discreet and scarcely recognised.

In December, the regulatory Securities and Investments Board in the City issued a report clearing the London Metal Exchange. Twelve days later, its chairman became a peer. Tariq Salari, senior copper consultant with the

'You can't get anybody a peerage. You don't buy a peerage either even if people think you do'

metals researchers CRU International, said: "Next year would have been a bit more appropriate given that things might have settled down a bit."

Lord Bagri and Lord Paul were invited last month to a celebration of their honours at the new Hindu temple in

Neasden, northwest London. It is typical of his low-key style that Bagri declined to attend while Paul allowed himself to be garlanded by a priest and community leaders, followed by a feast. Few realised that the missing lord had given a substantial six-figure donation to build the temple. He also contributed £135,000 to the Asian Women's Organisation, which provides language classes, advice and dancing.

Lord Paul is privately amused by the rumours surrounding the elevation of Bagri. In public, he is maintaining a suitably noble silence.

The new-found electoral muscle of British Asians is now there to be seen. People in Britain with origins in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh comprise 3 per cent of the population. In 36 constituencies, the Asian vote is larger than the sitting MP's majority. In 12 of the top 60 seats that Tony Blair needs to win power, Asian voters will determine the outcome. Party strategists are aware, more than ever since their arrival en masse in the early 1970s, that the support of Asians will be crucial to win this election.

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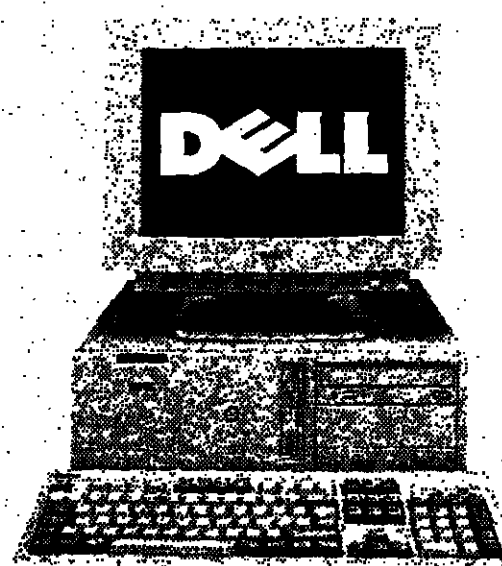
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Don't put Blair on the UK board

Michael Heseltine appeals to Labour's business breakfasters

Running Britain's most successful companies is an onerous, relentless responsibility. Past success is pocketed as a restless world moves on. The prizes are high, but the risks enormous and the men and women at the top of the ladder are hardened by the experience of climbing it. At breakfast today, some of them will listen to Tony Blair in his bid for political power. Should they choose him as chief executive of UK plc?

Perhaps it wasn't Tony Blair's fault that Jim Callaghan, Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock led the Labour Party to defeat after defeat. But there is no such excuse when one asks the question about judgment. Of course, anyone is entitled to be wrong and admit it, but if one is considering someone for high responsibility, it is fair to weigh in the balance the consideration that he now disowns every principle that he held ten years ago. If his old convictions were skin-deep, are his new convictions any deeper? If Tony Blair could argue, as he once did, that Britain should leave European Community and give up its independent nuclear deterrent, or defend nationalised industry and punitive tax rates, is it intellectual conviction that now persuades him to argue a different case? Or is it simply a recognition that voters will never vote for policies so out of keeping with their own interests and beliefs?

elation by the Chancellor on Tuesday of the implausibility of Labour's economic policies. We have watched year after year the nods and winks with which the promises have been made. Every criticism of government policy has been coupled with a pledge given or an impression conveyed that Labour would spend more money to solve the alleged problem.

Labour claims to have committed itself to the Conservative public expenditure plans for the next two years, without increasing income tax levels. Yet Ken Clarke has identified a £12 billion black hole in Gordon Brown's calculations. No doubt Mr Brown would try to blame his predecessor. If anyone wanted a stark warning of Gordon Brown's first statement if he became Chancellor, this is it: "I didn't know. I'm sorry I'm going to have to do this to you. It isn't my fault." And up go the taxes.

This Government has helped companies to reach levels of productivity and achievement that excite the admiration of the world. Just read the comments by the OECD and the IMF, which are hardly branch offices of the Conservative Party. But the challenge is to keep up the processes of change.

Labour policies all move in the wrong direction

We have today the best economic circumstances for a generation. We are outstripping our European competitors, scooping inward investment, enjoying the pre-eminence of the City of London and witnessing the birth of a new generation of small and medium-sized enterprises. Our privatised companies are staking their claim again in world markets; industrial relations are excellent; inflation is under control; exports are at an all-time high.

None of this was easily achieved. Competition intensifies with every year that passes. The rigour and discipline that achieved so much in yesterday's battles will be necessary in the challenges of tomorrow. This is why you could have no faith in a Labour government.

Take two of the main political events this week. First, the proposal to privatise London Underground and enable it to attract the investment it needs and enhance its quality of service. You could not distinguish between Tony Blair's reaction to this privatisation and Labour's resistance to every other privatisation of the past decade and a half. Let me quote Tony Blair's words in the House of Commons on Tuesday: "Once again a key public service will be sold off at a fraction of its true value so that a few people can make a vastly inflated profit with no guarantee of a proper service for the future." New Labour, old instincts? A man genuinely changed, or the politics of envy?

The other event was the re-

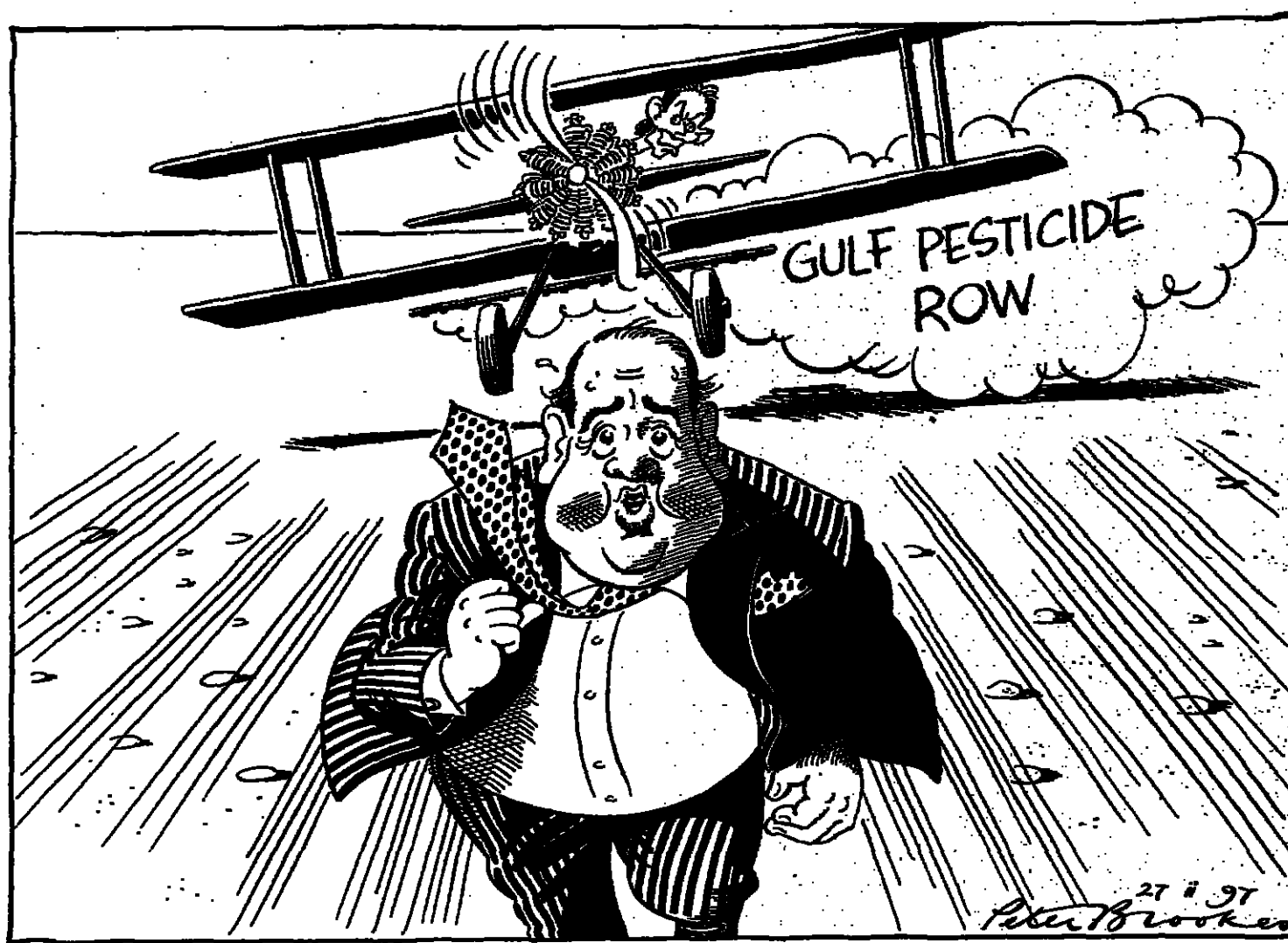
vision of the Labour Party's economic policies. It is a new tier of regional government in England and Wales do anything but add costs and delay to our decision-making? Does anyone believe that putting local education authorities back in charge of our schools would be anything but retrograde?

Is British industry calling out for a windfall tax, as though it could be extracted painlessly from our leading companies? Is Scottish business demanding a tartan tax? Is industry and commerce in the United Kingdom crying out to be subjected to the European economic model while French and other continental companies are fleeing, either eastwards to Central Europe or westwards to Britain, to escape it?

Would our companies benefit from Labour's new deal with the unions and the restoration of strikers' legal immunity? Labour is committed to the producer and not the consumer. Does it believe it really knows best and can judge for us better than we can for ourselves?

No one would argue that we have got everything right in the past 18 years. But no fair-minded person can dispute that Britain today is not recognisable as the Sick Man of Europe it was in 1979. It would be a mistake to believe that we can build on our success without the same vision and the same understanding of how an economy actually works. Since we have a chief executive with a proven record of success, we should not risk the unknown, the untried, the unpredictable.

The author is the Deputy Prime Minister.



NORTH BY NORTHWESTMINSTER

Beds, not trolleys

Britain is underfunding healthcare, especially in the private sector

On Monday, Tony Blair paid an exceptional third visit to the Wirral South by-election; his main campaign theme was the failures of the National Health Service. In the Wirral, as in many other parts of the country, the hospital service is overstretched to breaking point. There are 6,000 patients on waiting lists; one in four of them has been waiting at least six months for treatment.

Far too many patients in England and Wales are on waiting lists or are lying on hospital trolleys because the beds no longer exist. In 1970, there were 450,000 hospital beds, or nine per thousand of population. By 1990, that had fallen to 378,000 (7.6 per thousand); by 1995, it was 272,000 (4.3 per thousand). The numbers are still falling. In 25 years, England and Wales have lost half their hospital beds. That has not happened in the rest of Europe, where there are still, on average, nine beds per thousand of population; they are twice we were in 1970, and still have twice our present provision. England now has the fewest hospital beds in the whole of the European Union, fewer than Portugal. That is the cause of all the trouble.

The public is aware that things have gone very badly wrong in the hospitals, and blames the Government. People know that the hospitals are having to turn patients out too early, or cannot treat them without delays. If this has not happened to them personally, it has happened to their relations, their friends or their colleagues. Everyone has heard his own hospital horror story. It is not that the consultants are no good; most of them are skilful and caring. It is that the hospitals cannot cope with the flow of patients.

The decline of the hospital service may be the biggest single cause of the Government's political unpopularity. Who else could be blamed? The Conservatives have been in power since 1979. In 1980, the decline had already begun, but since 1980, more than 150,000 hospital beds have disappeared. Nobody said in 1980 that England and Wales ought to have 150,000 fewer hospital beds; it just happened that way. Naturally the Government in power over that period has to take the blame for the consequences. The Labour Party has been very skilful in suggesting that the Conservatives have neglected the

NHS, and people have believed them. Rightly, people mind deeply when their granannies have to lie for 20 hours on a trolley in a draughty corridor waiting for treatment for cancer.

Yet there is a difficulty. The Labour Party has always been hostile to private medicine, and has believed that private medicine was damaging to the health service. Yet international comparisons do not show that Britain is out of line in public spending, but that we are spending much less than other countries on private healthcare.

The figures in my table show that public health expenditure is more or less the same in the advanced countries. The shortfall is in the private sector in the United Kingdom; that is only about 15 per cent the size of the American, 70 per cent the size of the European, and 27 per cent of the OECD average. On the face of it, British policy needs to concentrate on encouraging and expanding private health provision until it reaches a more normal level. The Conservatives must be criticised for being too timid about that, but the Labour Party is definitely opposed to it, even though it has accepted public expenditure restraints which mean that it will not be able to increase public spending on health in any significant way.

PERCENTAGE OF GDP SPENT ON HEALTH				
	UK	US	EU	OECD
PUBLIC	5.9	6.2	8.0	8.9
PRIVATE	1.2	7.9	1.7	4.9

funded medical research would be inadequate. Dolly, the cloned sheep, is an example of the way in which some new medical research is being financed by venture capital. PPL Therapeutics was set up in 1987 to help finance and exploit the research of the Roslin Institute, which receives a royalty on the commercial applications. Roslin is also state-funded.

Even in those areas where the health service is the main provider, private healthcare is important. Private medicine is now performing 750,000 operations a year. The hospital service, with only about four beds per thousand of the population, does not have the capacity to perform these operations, and many of them have indeed been referred to the private sector from the NHS.

William Rees-Mogg

There is an obvious political paradox. The Conservative Party has failed to prevent excessive contraction of the hospital service. It has failed to encourage private healthcare, which is a necessary part of proper provision. It should have been more active in attracting additional private funds. Yet the Labour Party set up the health service as a single giant structure, on the same impractical model as the great state monopolies of the Soviet Union. The Labour Party remains opposed to encouraging private health provision, and regards it as a hostile force, despite the longstanding trade union links with the friendly societies. The truth is that private care is a necessary addition to public care; the Labour belief is that it undermines the public health system.

The risk is that the Labour Party will win the election partly because of

public concern about the health service, but will then adopt policies which make a bad situation worse. Some people hope that new Labour will understand that the only way to preserve the National Health Service is to develop co-operation with an expanded private sector.

The aim ought to be to enlarge the private sector by about £5 billion over the course of the next Parliament, while adding the necessary minimum of at least £1 billion to reversing the steady decline of beds in NHS hospitals. I doubt whether even Tony Blair can persuade the Labour Party to undertake such radical surgery on so sacred a cow.

The more likely outcome of a Labour victory is the continued deterioration of the National Health Service, while the Conservative Party becomes radicalised. In the 1980s, the Conservative administrations privatised industry and a large proportion of public housing. In the 1990s, they have failed to follow that up by extending privatisation into the social services of health, education and welfare, largely because they were afraid of the political cost. Health is the outstanding example of the political cost of their failure to do so. The reluctance to expand the private sector to the international norm has not produced a stronger but a weaker state sector. In defeat, the Conservative Party would no doubt have a great internal debate, and would be likely to decide that the 1992 Parliament was wasted because these issues were not tackled. I would be very surprised if they were faced in the manifesto by now that would in any case be much too late for the 1997 election.

Nevertheless, the weakness of Labour policy needs to be fully recognised. The Labour Party seems scarcely to have noticed the progressive erosion of hospital beds, let alone produced a policy to reverse the trend. For the health service to work properly, there should still be 300,000 hospital beds, as there were in 1985. Even though hospital stays are shorter with modern surgery, how are they going to be paid for? The Labour Party is committed not to increase expenditure and not to raise income tax. These beds cannot therefore be paid for out of public funds. They are in the same position as Dolly; they will either be paid for out of private funding or they will never come into existence at all.

Scotsman on the make?

Magnus Linklater on Andrew Neil and the bletherers

I think I've discovered a cause I want to subscribe to. It is the "liberal-left blethering classes", an updated version of the "chattering classes" (otherwise known as "Islington man"), but with a whingeing Scottish element added. (My Scots dictionary says that to blather means "to speak indistinctly; to stammer; to talk nonsense; to prattle or chatter.") My main reason for joining is that it is a class that has been singled out for attack by Mr Andrew Neil, former Editor-in-Chief of *The Scotsman* and its sister publications. It must therefore have a lot to be said for it.

Since taking up his new post, Mr Neil has wasted no time in laying into some institutions much cherished north of the border: local government, the Labour Party, education authorities, health spending, the *Herald* ("Glasgow's nationalist-socialist broadsheet"), "middle-class leftwingers" in general, and — shock, horror — devolution itself. A leader in his paper this week began: "To state the obvious: devolution is a nightmare." This is a bit like *The Times* saying "We cannot over-emphasise the advantages of a single currency..."

While *The Scotsman* goes on to explain that its quarrel is with the mechanics of constitutional change rather than its outcome, there must have been some palpitations among that paper's loyal subscribers. This, after all, is an organ that has worshipped at the altar of devolution for the best part of 100 years, which traces its enthusiasm for reform back to Gladstone's Midlothian campaigns, and has always argued that if the Scottish people want more self-government, they should have it. If it is now to abandon that position, the pre-election temperature in Scotland is going to change. Scottish Tories, for so long a beleaguered species, have found themselves an unexpected ally. Labour grinds its teeth.

Mr Neil must be delighted. This is precisely what he believes newspapers should be doing — making life uncomfortable. "They should hold forthright opinions and express them strongly," he wrote in his autobiography. "Ruining Sunday breakfasts" was the title of one of his more uncompromising chapters. And truth to tell, some of the harsh questions he is asking need to be put: why is it that local councils in Scotland spend 34 per cent more per head than their English counterparts? Why should Scottish schools have smaller classes than England and Wales and still expect a British government to fund them? Why should more be spent on health on Clydeside than Merseyside? Who would be hit by Labour's tartan tax? He is not the first to pose them — they have long been part of the currency of Scottish politics. But they are worth exploring again, and with an election approaching, they acquire fresh urgency.

But pursuing the answers carries a distinct risk: the process may well alienate the very people whom Mr Neil's newly acquired newspaper represents. The Scots do not always respond to these things in quite the way their critics expect them to, as Margaret Thatcher found in the course of her trips north. It is one thing to tell the Scots what is good for them. It is quite another to expect them to appreciate it. Mr Neil has one advantage over her: he is a Scot. He has one disadvantage: he believes she did not go far enough. As he explains in his book, his own political agenda was so radical that it "left the Thatcherites gasping". I suspect Scotland may not quite be ready for it.

Local government is a case in point. Councils do spend more per head on health, education and other social services. They do so for reasons partly to do with geography and social need, but mainly because down the years successive ministers have encouraged them. It is a bias of which the Scots approve. They have high expectations of public spending, and when it is cut back they voice their disapproval loudly and openly. By far the largest street demonstrations in Scotland recently have been against school cutbacks. Logic might suggest that councils should reduce their spending in line with other British bodies, but logic will not win many votes — or readers.

Equally, the notion that a Scottish parliament should have tax-raising powers may not be quite as repugnant to his countrymen as Mr Neil presumes. Far from seeing it as unfair or unwelcome, they probably reckon that without it, a parliament would be toothless; and as to the mechanics, they may feel it is up to the politicians to make it work. In short, Mr Neil is working across the grain of Scottish opinion, and much as he may feel duty-bound to do so, he cannot expect many thanks.

He also has one logical barrier of his own to cross: he has promised that *The Scotsman* will remain committed to devolution. But if over the next few weeks he knocks away the pillars that support it, there may not be much of a structure to recommend to his readers when it comes to the vote. It might be better, perhaps, to devote his considerable polemical skills to explaining how it might be made to work, rather than demonstrating that it cannot. But perhaps I'm just blithering.

Oasis of calm

THERE is some top-level house-hunting going on in Ireland at the moment at the request of the pop singer Liam Gallagher and his actress moll Patsy Kensit. The couple, who have been having trouble keeping their affairs private in recent months, have asked Lord Andrew Hay of Knight Frank in London and Dominic Daly in Cork to find them a place where they can flop undisturbed.

Hay was reluctant to discuss the matter, but it is known that

Gallagher and Kensit are particularly interested in somewhere in southwest Ireland, in the remote regions of Co Kerry, close to Cork. Last year, they were reported to be looking at a flat in Dublin. This came to nothing. Generous tax breaks, as well as privacy, may be playing a part in their thinking.

Gallagher, for all his macho grunting, has an endearing desire to find a decent home. Last year, he pulled out of Oasis's American tour, saying he had to look at

houses with Miss Kensit. Now in the wake of their disastrous attempt to marry in private, the time may be right to leave London. They would not be short of famous company out in Ireland, where the likes of David Bowie, Mia Farrow, Mick Jagger and Lord Lloyd Webber camp out occasionally.

Asked if the couple were looking for anything in particular, Daly said: "Clients like these are looking for seclusion."

Just imagine

THERE may be a reason for those increasingly improbable storylines on the BBC's *EastEnders*: one of the scriptwriters is Nicholas Hicks Beach, descendant of one of Queen Victoria's Lord Chancellors, and kinsman of the Earl St Aldwyn — all a long way from the East End.

Hicks Beach, who is a product of Charterhouse and Bristol University, has been a linchpin of the *EastEnders* writing team for some while now. He was raised in a Regency house in Buckinghamshire, before his parents retired to the splendidly named Cucumber Hall, a thatched cottage in Suffolk.

He is sensitive when his upbringing is contrasted with the urban hell he writes about. Speaking from Los Angeles, where he is working on a film, he says: "Look at the end of the day, it's all fiction.



I've just scripted a movie about a man on Death Row, but I've never been there, have I?"

Even fearsome Lennox Lewis, WBC world boxing champion, can be made to cringe by his mother. "He was a very naughty boy," says Violet Blake in an interview for the *Mother's Day* edition of *Omni*, before remembering how she once spanked the young boxer in the supermarket. "That was a little embarrassing," confesses Lennox.

Real men

THERE are no doubts about the masculinity of Tory men in Enfield Southgate. Michael Portillo's constituency. To raise money for the local Conservative Association's campaign chest, they are planning a rollicking "Sportsmen's Dinner".

More Canadian Air Force than Jane Fonda when it comes to exercising, they have invited the former Yorkshire and England cricketer Brian Close, whose accent makes even Geoff Boycott sound like the Duke of Edinburgh. They promise to drink plenty.

It's all butch stuff, agrees the organiser, Malcolm Tyndall. Wisely, Portillo, more aesthete than athlete, will not be attending.

The appointment of Paul Spike, the husband of Vogue's Editor, Alexandra Shulman, as Editor of Mohamed Al Fayed's *Punch*, will come as disappointing news for that old Liverpool Auberon Waugh. He is said to have been heavily compensated for the pittance he is paid to edit the diling Literary Review. Asked whether Spike would be remunerated with the same six-figure wage as the previous Editor, Peter McKay, Stewart Steven, chairman of Al Fayed's publishing group, gave an adamant "No".

China: fragile

THREE MONTHS to go before the Hong Kong handover, and there is no easing off in the verbal war between the Governor, Chris Patten, and Sir Percy Cradock, the



"Could you run the iron over our white flag, Alice?"

former Ambassador to China. In Channel 4's *Dispatches* tonight, Cradock says of Patten: "He has been incompetent, and as a result of it we are getting less democracy, less protection, less rule of law than we would have got if he hadn't come."

Patten has no trouble parrying these haymakers: "I'd prefer to remain decent and diplomatic," he says, "even if some of the great heroes of our past diplomatic exchanges with China are a little less resistent in what they say about the present."



Kensit and Gallagher: known to be publicity-shy



DOUBLE TROUBLE

But cloning does not herald the end of humanity

In the age of innocence that preceded the splitting of the atom, scientific knowledge was seen as a power for good, its promise unclouded by the fears and ethical dilemmas that have since come crowding in. Today, so thoroughly has the lesson been learnt that almost any new discovery provokes as many worries as it inspires hopes. Never has this been plainer than in the public reaction to the discovery by Scottish scientists of a method for cloning sheep from adult cells.

The finding is a remarkable one. Adult cells were supposed to be specialised, forced into a straitjacket that prevented them from evolving into all the organs of the body. The Roslin Institute team who produced a lamb called Dolly from an empty egg and a cell from the mammary gland of an adult ewe have proved that belief groundless. In doing so they have created a means of producing identical copies of animals that may be useful in agriculture, and started a million hares running in the well-prepared minds of the reading public. Science fiction had been replete with stories of clones for decades before the technique of producing them was first dreamt up; that is why, for many, this discovery has a special horror.

The natural assumption is that what will work for sheep will also work for man, that, at some point, the Roslin technique will be used to produce carbon-copy people. Possibly it will. Certainly people will believe that it will, even if in Britain the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act makes the cloning of human beings from embryos illegal. Elsewhere the rich and egocentric may indeed attempt to start a dynasty of identical descendants, achieving a kind of immortality by leaving behind younger versions of themselves. They may try to delay their deaths by creating clones from whom organs could be harvested.

Identical genes do not, of course, mean identical people. We are all the product of our experience, working on the genetic inheritance we were given at the lottery of conception. Those who try to produce human clones may be disappointed, for neither genius nor evil springs fully formed

from the genes. First, the clone will not have shared the same uterine environment as the original person; so may not even be as close as are identical twins from the same womb. While genes provide the raw material for human character, it is the way that the material is forged which makes the person. A Mozart clone would stand a better chance of being a great composer than the average person, but would not match Mozart's genius unless he shared exactly the same experiences in life. In any case, the essence of genius is originality; a copy could never be more than an imitation.

Most of the more futuristic ideas about cloning pose no real dilemma because they are morally unacceptable and clearly seen to be so. The creation of brain-dead humans beings as organ-farms, for example, would erode our concept of what it means to be a human being, and create a form of genetic slavery which no civilised society could tolerate. That does not mean there are no dangers; but man has long been able to do many immoral and dangerous things.

There are other examples where the argument may be more delicately balanced. After the loss of a treasured baby, there might be some sympathy for a couple who wanted to replace the child not with another one, but with an identical one. Equally, mothers are already known to have conceived children in the hope of finding a bone marrow match for an existing child who needs it to survive. Cloning would make the process certain rather than a lottery.

Whatever decisions are reached in cases like these, there is no need for moral panic. Even if misused, it does not match the threats posed by some other technologies. Cloning may make us feel uncomfortable, but it does not threaten the future of humanity. Even in agriculture, for which it was designed, it may prove less useful than its originators believe; all it can do is to copy existing excellence, not improve upon it. To do that involves crossing one good animal with another. Improvement comes from variation, not uniformity. That is the power of sexual reproduction.

AN INCOMPLETE DEFENCE

Ministers may be exonerated: their ministry is not

By the standards of internal government inquiries, terms such as "serious flaws" and "fundamental failures" are little short of sensational. The Mottram report describes how ministers received and then passed on to Members of Parliament information that was thoroughly misleading. As a result, there were consistent denials that troops serving in the Gulf War had significant exposure to organophosphate chemicals. In fact some units were saturated with them. Although there is still no established link between these substances and so-called Gulf War syndrome, the suspicions held by many of those affected are not surprising.

The affair probably had its roots in poor communication between civil servants and soldiers in the field. That might have been understandable, if not excusable, in conflict conditions. But it went far beyond that. The signs that proper procedure had not been followed were swift in arriving. Within months of the Allied victory the Pentagon publicly acknowledged to the US Congress that American soldiers had acquired and used substantial quantities of pesticides from Saudi Arabian sources.

Despite that, only in 1995 apparently, did Ministry of Defence staff receive indications that British forces might have done the same. That information was not properly assessed nor made available to ministers. By 1996, those same people knew that inappropriate material had definitely been deployed in vast amounts and then still did not bring the matter to their superiors. All this occurred despite mounting evidence produced to the contrary by MPs, the media, many pressure groups, solicitors for the afflicted, and parts of the ministry itself.

This has been a disgraceful episode. The behaviour of the culpable individuals makes their continued employment at the MoD quite impossible. It does not, though, constitute a "classic political cover-up" or imply that MoD officials were being used as "fall guys" in the manner suggested by the Shadow Defence Secretary, David Clark. Furthermore, despite demands to the contrary, it would have been unfair and unreasonable to name the individuals concerned at this stage of proceedings.

The absence of political conspiracy hardly means that the matter can be dismissed as poor bureaucratic practice. The failure to notify ministers and Parliament, is not all that went wrong here. If it was, then the salutary sackings that Richard Mottram has strongly hinted at would indeed be sufficient. The chief concern should be the indifference towards, or ineptitude with, the evidence that the Armed Forces had encountered pesticides. With the, admittedly invaluable, benefit of hindsight, Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, and his senior advisers should not have swallowed the departmental line.

Security considerations have largely protected the Ministry of Defence from radical restructuring seen elsewhere in Whitehall. They have been too long a shield from outside inspection. Procedure, as well as personnel, has been found wanting by the Mottram report. Confidence in the competence of, and connections between, the military, civil servants and ministers, has been shaken. A further and external investigation into the operations of the MoD should be undertaken before this Government or the next pronounces itself satisfied.

SHAVED BULLS

Where is the honour in facing blunted horns?

"Bullfighting is the only art," wrote Hemingway in *Death in the Afternoon*, "in which the artist is in danger of death and in which the degree of brilliance in the performance is left to the fighter's honour." These stirring words are, in truth, quite dated. A sport that now matches heavyweight boxing for sheer corruption and gimmickry is no longer that which moved Hemingway to his prose.

As our Madrid correspondent writes today, the killjoys of the Confederación de Asociaciones Profesionales Taurinas — effectively the main union for anyone who has anything to do with the bullfighting world — have come out on indefinite strike, putting in peril the bullfight season which starts next week. But why are they striking? Hemingway, were he still with us, would surely want an explanation.

Do the "taurine professionals" want better pay? Tighter trousers? More tinsel on their chest-huggers? A better pension scheme? More amorous attention from film actresses? No, they strike for none of these things. What they want is a series of regulations that would, in effect, produce safer bulls — beasts with blunted horns — which would make life in the bullring much less difficult for the modern matador.

Wait a minute, we hear you say. Safer bulls? Is not danger the whole purpose of the

exercise? Have not we in Britain, while a trifle squeamish about the cruelty of this sport, always conceded a grudging admiration for these matadors who square up to a snorting tonne of foul-tempered beef? Has not Spain's mad, vain essence not lain always in the *fiesta nacional* and the dagger-sharp horns of a bull?

The sad truth, of course, is that "Hemingway's Spain" has changed. Bullfighting has become a tawdry pantomime. The analogy with heavyweight boxing is apt: in the bullring, as in the boxing ring, only age-old form is maintained. All else is hype. Stunts prevail over substance, ruses ride higher than raw courage. Just as heavyweight boxing is rife with fat men who flail about with their large, gloved fists, so too is bullfighting awash with poseurs and fops.

As bullfighting standards have dropped, so too has the standard of criticism on the terraces. Yet as Europe drains Spain of all the things that once made it a different — and delightful — place, Spaniards are flocking to the bullring in ever greater numbers. Perhaps they see a simple truth in the bullring: by clinging to the bull, they cling to a Spain which is rapidly vanishing. The peseta may one day turn into a "euro", but a Spanish bull — however blunt its horns — will always be a Spanish bull.

Dr Sacks and the Enlightenment

From the Senior Rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue

Sir, Many of us admire the eloquence and scholarship of the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations, so give Dr Jonathan Sacks his correct title (he is the religious authority for only 40 per cent of synagogue-affiliated Anglo-Jews). However, we are less impressed by his vacillating and maladroit handling of such issues as the role of women in Orthodox synagogues, or by his participation in memorial tributes to the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn (report, February 21).

In particular, we take issue with Dr Sacks's thesis ("Tradition and the politics of Babel", February 22), ringingly endorsed in your leading article of the same day, of giving only two cheers for the Enlightenment and of wanting to stiffen its achievements with an old-fashioned dose of the vision that once guided us and "that we loosely call the Judeo-Christian tradition".

It is now fashionable among neo-conservative thinkers like Dr Sacks to question the benefits of the Enlightenment: too much individual liberty leading to the breakdown of morality, the erosion of family virtues, respect for religious tradition etc. How much better in the past, when the Bible and that Judeo-Christian tradition "taught us moral habits" and "gave us a framework of virtue".

Perhaps so, but the Judeo-Christian tradition was hardly an all-embracing value system. Its ideal form of government was a theocracy. Principles we take for granted, like democracy, freedom of belief, equality of the sexes, or racial tolerance, are a result of the Enlightenment, not the Judeo-Christian tradition. The very fact that Jews were permitted to come out of the ghetto, receive a secular education, pursue careers of their own choosing, and have the right to vote would not have happened without the Enlightenment.

All orthodoxes find it difficult to accept heterodoxy, as Dr Sacks's continuing inability to reach an accommodation with non-Orthodox Judaism based on mutual respect and recognition of pluralism testifies. So it is not surprising that he should hark back to that pre-Enlightenment golden age of religious order and uniformity. But I find it a cause for concern in our open, multicultural, multiracial society when a leading newspaper applauds wholeheartedly such an essentially reactionary prescription for moral rejuvenation.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID J. GOLDBERG,
Senior Rabbi,
The Liberal Jewish Synagogue,
28 St John's Wood Road, NW8,
February 24.

Beatrix Potter

From Mr G. W. D. Findlay

Sir, Following your recent account of Beatrix Potter's long-delayed recognition as a skilled and serious naturalist and scientist (report, February 11), I thought your readers might be interested to know that her skills as a scientific illustrator were recognised and published by my father, the late W. P. K. (Philip) Findlay, some 30 years ago.

Inspired by Margaret Lane's account of how Beatrix Potter hoped her illustrations would one day be used by an expert, my father (himself a one-time president of the British Mycological Society) used 59 of her charming but nonetheless accurate paintings in his book on *Fungi in the Wares Way-side and Woodland series*, published in 1967.

In the book he recounts his pleasure, which I recall myself, of unifying the tapes of Potter's hand-made folios in the Armitt Museum in Ambleside to discover the real skill and complete accuracy of her paintings. He refers also to the scientific paper she presented to the Linnean Society in 1897.

It is particularly pleasing and timely that the Linnean Society should now be commemorating her work.

Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY FINDLAY,
Hope Cottage, Crowood Lane,
Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire,
February 19.

Dickens statue

From Mr Alan Wren

Sir, Surely Dickens's will (report, February 18 letters, February 23, 26) was relevant and binding only on his executors, family and other beneficiaries. If none of these erect or condone any "monument, memorial or testimonial whatever", his wishes will have been fulfilled.

A bust of Dickens, tucked away in Waterhouse Square, part of the old Prudential building in High Holborn, records that he lived and worked close by.

Portsmouth now wishes to pay a compliment to one of its most illustrious sons. The vision and values should be appreciated and the conscience clear.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN WREN,
39 Willowdene Close,
New Milton, Hampshire,
February 26.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Divisions on EU legislative burden

From Mr Christopher Booker

Sir, In his article of February 24, "Can we win back our democracy?", Lord Rees-Mogg rightly points out that one of the key factors currently undermining the rule of Parliament is the huge amount of legislation which now passes into British law by way of statutory instruments implementing laws from Brussels. As he suggests, many of these have an impact on our national life that would once have required a full Act of Parliament.

But Lord Rees-Mogg seriously underestimates the scale on which these bureaucratic decrees are now emerging from the Whitehall machine. He cites a recent parliamentary answer which stated that, since 1992, between 134 and 236 statutory instruments a year have been required to transpose Brussels directives. These figures are taken from Butterworth's *EC Legislation*, the staff of which I have spotted freely admit they may not have spotted them all.

Only a proportion of Brussels directives are put into law under the European Communities Act 1972; many more are transposed under other enabling Acts, such as the Environment Act 1990 and the Food Safety Act 1990.

Even more significantly, the Butterworth's list only includes directives and decisions. It does not include EU regulations at all, although these now constitute by far the largest element in EU lawmaking, accounting for well over 1,000 pieces of new legislation a year, some of which have devastating effects on entire British industries.

At a time when the average number of statutes passed annually by Parliament has been declining, the number of statutory instruments issued by Whitehall has in recent years soared to record levels, averaging well over 3,000 annually since 1992. Easily the greatest factor in the growth of this rule by bureaucracy has been the need to implement EU legislation.

Lord Rees-Mogg is right to suggest

that this represents a major erosion of democracy; but the true situation is even worse than he fears.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER BOOKER,
The Old Rectory, Litton, Bath,
February 24.

From Mr Ronald Parkin

Sir, It seems to me disingenuous of Lord Rees-Mogg to inveigh against the flood of European Community directives of recent years without mentioning of their purpose or consideration of how that very desirable purpose could be brought about in a reasonably businesslike way by more democratic processes.

The purpose, as I am sure Lord Rees-Mogg well knows, is to replace literally thousands of separate national trade regulations (each a barrier to trade) with common EU regulations enabling all traders within the common market to compete on a level playing field.

It seems to me, as a one-time civil servant, that such a process inevitably involves the collection by officers of information about national regulations, the distillation from them of a single set of regulations likely to be acceptable to all the participating nations, and the approval of that set by ministers democratically appointed by those nations.

The mind boggles at the thought of presenting such sets of regulations for approval by all the national parliaments and reconciling all the contrary views which might be expressed. The argument could go on endlessly and there would be plenty of vested interests concerned to see that it did.

There are some jobs for which even the attenuated democracy of elected parliaments is not well suited.

Yours sincerely,
RONALD PARKIN,
Chiltern House, Lower Assendon,
Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire,
February 24.

Job security

From Mr David Smith

Sir, Dr John Philpott (letter, February 21) challenges the assertions of your earlier leading article ("Old party card", February 11) on the subject of job insecurity. All the points he raised were covered in my Social Market Foundation paper, which you cited.

The insecurity lobby has an obsession with employment rights, when true job security has very little to do with them. Even so, the number of full-time workers with employment rights, unaffected by any changes in legislation, has been rising during the 1990s, from 70 per cent in 1990 to 74 per cent in 1995. The number of part-timers covered, where there has been legislative change, has increased from 30 per cent to 57 per cent.

Average job tenure, as you correctly stated, has fallen only marginally in the past 20 years. The fact that, within this, tenure has fallen for men but risen for women does not only reflect the greater availability of maternity rights (itself an indication that Britain does not have an unregulated labour market) but also greater equality of

job opportunity — better-paying jobs tend to have longer tenure — between men and women. Average tenure has risen in the past few years, from around 4½ years in the spring of 1990, before the recession, to 5½ years now. It has increased for both sexes in the 1990s.

Statistics aside, the real point is that, as long as the myth of generalised job insecurity is peddled, it will be much more difficult for governments to frame policies which help the genuinely disadvantaged.

Despite his protestations to the contrary (letter, February 21), Mr Peter Hain's suggestion of new job security arrangements for the public sector does indeed begin with the myth of "a revolving-door economy where people are in and out of jobs and cannot plan for the future" and suggests a scheme to cover the whole of the public sector. Labour needs better ideas than this.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID SMITH,
(Economics Editor),
The Sunday Times,
1 Pennington Street, E1,
February 21.

Animal traps

From the Director General of the RSPCA

Sir, It was ironic and perhaps highly appropriate that the day you published a letter from the Canadian High Commission (February 24) extolling the "merits" of the Agreement on Humane Trapping Standards, the EU foreign ministers agreed in Brussels that the agreement was unsatisfactory and asked the Commission to reopen negotiations with Canada to strengthen it.

In doing so, they not only agreed with European animal welfare organisations but also backed the EU environment ministers, who vetoed the agreement two months ago.

The RSPCA agrees that a multilateral approach could increase global welfare standards. However, if this approach lowers the high welfare standards that the EU already enjoys, it can only be seen as a retrograde step.

This trapping agreement falls into

the latter category, as it would allow the import of furs from wild animals caught in certain types of leghold traps, even though the use of such traps has been banned in the EU since 1995 and in the UK since 1988.

The implications of this issue go wider than improving the welfare of fur-bearing animals. It underlines the uneasy relationship between international trade rules and raising animal welfare standards. This has already caused the EU to weaken its four-year-old legislation designed to prohibit the use of animals in cosmetics tests, and there are other pieces of legislation under threat.

The EU has high welfare standards. The decision of the foreign ministers reflects their desire to maintain them.

Yours sincerely,
PETER DAVIES,
Director General,
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,
Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex,
February 25.

Lost legend

From Mr C. M. Tubbs

Sir, In defence of Michael Faraday, alleged to hold "incredible opinions of the unscientific world" (leading article, "Raiders of the lost legends", February 20), it can be asserted that the small group known as Sandemanians were, in fact, by Faraday's own sermons, within the main traditions of Christian orthodoxy. The expulsion of Robert Sandeman (1719-71) from the Established Church in Dundee related in part to his literal interpretation of the Bible.

Faraday described himself not as a chemist but as a philosopher. Like numerous distinguished scientists, including Kelvin and Maxwell, his religious belief provided powerful motivation. Any implication that his religion was a peculiar romantic deviation from his scientific work is misleading.

Yours faithfully,
MERVYN TUBBS,
la Shipton Court,
Shipton under Wychwood,
Oxfordshire.

Struggle to fund museum awards

From the Chairman of the Museum of the Year Award Committee

Sir, None was more pleased than I at the news (reports, February 21) that 29 museums and galleries are due to share some £137 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. As the founder of the Museum of the Year Award (Moya) 25 years ago, and a member of the judging committee ever since, I have visited most of these museums and know the fine work that is going on at them in attracting and sustaining public interest in the artistic and scientific heritage of the United Kingdom.

However, just as this bonanza is announced, we find ourselves struggling to find a sponsor to ensure the future of Moya for the next five-year period. Each year the judges visit around 40 museums which have completed some new gallery or project that enhances the education and pleasure of the visiting public.

Our aim is to encourage and advise (when asked) but above all to broadcast the good work that is being done in our museums and encourage other museums to go one better. Attendance almost always doubles at a museum in the year after a Moya award, which gives it an incentive and provides it with benchmarks of excellence in scholarship, presentation and design.

We want to put the scheme on a secure permanent funding pattern for the future. We seem to be very successful at raising museum standards, but less successful at raising money in these lottery-obsessed days.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN LITTLE,
Chairman, Museum of the Year Award Committee,
9a North Street, SW4,
February 25.

Wreck of a slaver

From Dr Laurie Croft

Sir, Your report (February 24) of the discovery of a mass grave of shipwrecked slaves at Rapparee Cove, Ilfracombe, did not mention a more observable relic of the wreck of the *London*. I refer to the peculiar yellow pebbles that are abundant on the Rapparee beach but are not found elsewhere on the coast.

The naturalist Philip Henry Gosse (1810-88) was the first to draw attention to this remarkable feature in his book, *A Naturalist's Rambles on the Devonshire Coast*, published in 1853. He concluded that this "curious testimony of the shipwreck" was in fact ballast from the ship, and that it would "probably endure long after the event itself is lost in oblivion".

Yours sincerely,
LAURIE CROFT,
11 Amblesay, Walton-Le-Dale,
Preston, Lancashire,
February 24.

From Mr Alan R. V. Anderson

Sir, It is not likely that the reason the captain of the *London* declined to dock in Ilfracombe harbour with his 60 captured French black slaves was the 1772 decision, given by Lord Mansfield in the name of the entire Court of King's Bench, that as soon as a slave set his foot on the soil of the "British Islands" he became free.

Yours faithfully,
A. R. V. ANDERSON,
(Notary public and solicitor),
Coles de Rozel,
Jérôme, CL,
February 25.

Birthday mission

From Mr Kenneth Nicholls

Sir, I was amused to read Mr Kenneth Adams's letter (February 19) about the exploits of Bunry Rymills (obituary, February 13) flying over Germany on his 21st birthday.

Bunry's beer bottles were not recklessly cast away; it was well known to bomber crews that empty ones hurtling down from a great height would produce a whistling sound similar to that of a bomb thus, hopefully, adding to the alarm and despondency on the ground.

It was not unusual for crews to forgo the amusements — or whatever — for the return of the beer bottles and include a few for an operational sortie, fully ensuring that they were empty, of course.

On the Wellington bombers in which I flew the bottles were dropped from the flare chute over the target area but with little attempt at aim.

Yours faithfully,
K. S. NICHOLLS,
6 Seaview Court,
43-45 Marine Parade East,
Lee-on-the-Solent, Hampshire,

Bang to rights

From Mr Graham Bird

Sir, Earlier this week I bought some pre-packaged pork sausages whose wrapper bears the confident claim "Minimum 100 per cent meat".

Given that even the most advanced food processing machinery is not perfect, can I reasonably assume that some sausages which come off the production line will exceed this miserly figure?

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM BIRD,
44 Ravensmead Way, W4,
February 20.

Bargains of the week: Jamaica at a discount... Amsterdam for the young from £67... lots of Easter offers

JAMAICA for a fortnight at the all-inclusive Club Ambience resort, with a night from Gatwick on March 17, is available from Unijet for £819 a person - a saving of £166. Details: 0990 336336.

LANZAROTE for £335 a person for a week's self-catering is available from Inspirations. Fly from Gatwick on March 27 and from Glasgow the same day for an extra £30. Details: 01293 822244.

WATERSPORTS and a heated pool are among facilities offered at Broadland Holiday Village, Lowestoft, East Anglia, where cottages are still available for Easter week from Blakes Cottages. A cottage sleeping five costs from £308. Details: 01282 445097.

CAMPUS TRAVEL is offering students and the under-26s European city breaks at prices from little more than £100. Return flights to Amsterdam cost from £67, Zurich from £96 and Milan £134. Budget accommodation is available from £18 a night. Details: 0171-730 3402.

SPA RESORTS on the Danube in Hungary and in Italy are available for Easter breaks

HOLIDAYS from Thermalia Travel. Flights go from London airports on March 27 and cost from £324 a person. Details: 0171-483 1898.

INDONESIA for Easter is on offer from Exodus. A 17-day discovery tour features temples and mountains, beaches on Bali and a monkey forest on Lombok, priced at £1,120 a person and including all transport and accommodation. Fly from London on Good Friday. Details: 0181-675 5550.

ISTANBUL for an Easter break is available from £209 a person from Accommodation Overseas, including a flight from Gatwick on Good Friday and three nights' B&B accommodation. Easter week holidays in Turkish resorts also available. Details: 0181-977 2884.

ASIAN TIGERS - increasingly under threat - will be the main attraction on a 13-day tour to India's Kanha Tiger Reserve with Naturetrek leaving Heathrow on Good Friday. Priced at £1,390 a person, including flights, accommodation and

most meals. Details: 01962 733051.

THE Costa Blanca for £237 a person for an Easter week's self-catering holiday is available from Advantage Travel Centres, with a flight from Gatwick on March 29. Details: 0990 881888.

GUESTS booking an Easter break in the next two weeks with Jean Bartlett Cottage Holidays in properties in east Devon and west Dorset will get the chance to win a free winter break for up to four people. Details: 01297 23221.

EASTER CAMP adventure holidays for children aged seven to 16 are available at a £40 discount and free insurance from Superchoice if booked by March 17. The camp runs at Osmington Bay near Weymouth for a week from April 5 and now costs £205. Details: 01273 691100.

IF ST PATRICK'S DAY is more important to you than Easter, Quest Worldwide is offering a four-day package to see the annual parade in New York on March 17 from £313 a person. Price includes return flights and hotel accommodation. Details: 0181-546 6000.



Two-night Easter breaks at Accor Hotels in Belgian cities, including Bruges, with P&O European Ferries Holidays, cost from £113 a person. Details: 01992 456045

JOIN the hunt for a solid gold pendant egg worth £875, designed by Sarah Fabergé for the St Petersburg Collection, at the Four Seasons Hotel, Park Lane, London. Guests staying or eating in the hotel over the Easter weekend can look for the golden egg among chocolate eggs being given away. Room rates over the weekend start at £230 a night. Details: 0171-499 0888.

STAY any three nights at one of the 90 Thistle hotels in Britain between March 28 and April 3 and get up to a 30 per cent discount on the third night. Typical price is £103 a person for three nights' half-board at the Northumbria Thistle Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne. Details: 0800 332244.

A DELUXE double bedroom at the Penbridge Court Hotel in west London over the Easter weekend costs £115 (normally £155) a night for two people, including full English breakfast. A box of chocolate kittens is offered in each room in honour of Spencer and Churchill, the hotel's resident cats. Details: 0171-229 9977.

A WELCOME bottle of champagne is included in the Easter package at the luxury

Hotel Hassler Villa Medici in Rome when booked through Leading Hotels of the World. Cost is £432 a room a night, based on a minimum stay of three nights, and including a special Easter lunch for two in the hotel's rooftop restaurant, airport transfers and a four-hour sightseeing tour of Rome. Details: 0800 181123.

A CHILDREN'S Easter egg hunt on Easter Saturday followed the next day by a treasure trail through local villages is on offer at the Strington Park Hotel near Stratford-upon-Avon. Price is £105 a person a night, based on a two-night stay, for any two nights over the Easter weekend, including dinner. Details: 01899 450123.

AN alternative Easter for children is a week at the Camp Beaumont activity centres in Norfolk and Staffordshire available from March 29 until April 5. Full board for a child costs £245 and includes riding, archery and swimming. Details: 0171-724 2233.

SPECIAL Easter rates at the new Zanzibar Serena Inn,

which claims to be Zanzibar's first deluxe hotel, are from £75 to £106 a person a night. Details: 00 255 578175.

HOME-MADE hot cross buns and chocolate Easter eggs will be given away at the Atlantic Hotel in Jersey over the Easter weekend. Rates start from £255 a person for three nights, including dinner and use of a hire car. Details: 01534 44101.

AN EASTER dinner-dance at the Ritz Hotel in London is available on Good Friday and Easter Saturday at £45 a person. Details: 0171-493 8181.

EASTER rate at the Saint James Hotel in Paris, a chateau-style property located in the elegant 16th district, is about £194 a room a night when booked through Prima Hotels, including a bottle of champagne on arrival but excluding city tax of just under £1 a person a night. Details: 0800 181535.

THE Easter "Take a Break" rate at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Birmingham is £69 a person a night based on double occupancy, with breakfast charged at an extra £12 a person. Details: 0121-643 1234.

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Holidays go on sale for 1998

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

SOARING consumer confidence has persuaded Britain's leading tour operators to launch next winter's holiday brochures — even before winter is over.

As booking levels are already 20 per cent above last year's figures, Thomson yesterday put 250,000 holidays on sale for winter 1997. By doing so, it hopes to take advantage of the windfall cash due to 10 million building society savers this year and to capitalise on the surging demand. Thomson was joined by Airtours, First Choice and Cosmos, which each offered discount prices well below this year's levels.

With the pound continuing to strengthen against most foreign currencies, it has been possible for most brochure holiday prices to be held at this year's levels and for some to be reduced sharply.

Richard Bowden-Doyle, Thomson's deputy managing director, said last night: "The economic climate looks positive and consumer confidence is running high. Add this to the fact that we've reduced prices and it's clear that the demand for next winter will be strong."

Airtours and Cosmos also launched brochures aimed at the more mature holidaymaker with Airtours' Golden Years brochure offering holidays for older people from £99 a person. More than 60 per cent of Golden Years customers spend at least three weeks away at prices that can work out as little as £2.85 a night.

Trams return to favour as cities fight pollution

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

A 13-MILE-long tram service from the centre of Manchester to the city's fast-developing airport is to be built at a cost of more than £145 million. Government approval for the extension of the Metrolink tramway was given this week, to the delight of Manchester airport officials, who plan to persuade up to 25 per cent of all airline passengers to use public transport to go to the airport.

Trams have proved a boon for cities elsewhere in the world, such as Melbourne, that decided decades ago not to rip up their tramlines. Now their use is developing into the British transport success story of the 1990s, as an increasing number of cities press ahead with projects.

As well as Blackpool, which never lost its tramways, Sheffield now has a new, though less-making, Supertram service running through the city centre, work is under way on the Midland Metro for Birmingham and nearby towns, and an 18-mile network is planned for Croydon in south London.

Leeds, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Liverpool, Bristol and Cardiff are all studying proposals for similar schemes. But the concept was developed by Manchester, whose ten local authorities opened the Metrolink service over 19 miles of track between Bury and Altrincham and Man-

chester centre in 1992. Since then passenger numbers have exceeded expectations; at least 13 million people a year are hopping on and off the trams, which can each carry 200 passengers at speeds of up to 30 miles an hour.

Trams are claimed to be the most energy-efficient and least polluting form of transport available, saving between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of energy compared with a car. The emissions produced by the trams are much lower, and harmful particulates — which the Government is pledged to halve over the next eight years — are completely eliminated.

Metrolink is reckoned to have reduced the number of car journeys by 2.5 million a year and peak traffic on parallel roads has fallen by up to 6 per cent at a time when traffic on other routes has increased sharply. Now the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority has won its planning battle to extend the tram service through much of the area.

Among other extensions that it plans are 15 miles to Oldham and Rochdale, six miles to Didsbury, four miles to Trafford Park, 4.5 miles to Eccles and Salford Quays, and six miles to east Manchester and Tameside. A full public inquiry was held into the proposed extension of the Metro service to the airport in 1995 and it has taken the Department of Transport until now to decide whether to accept its recommendations.

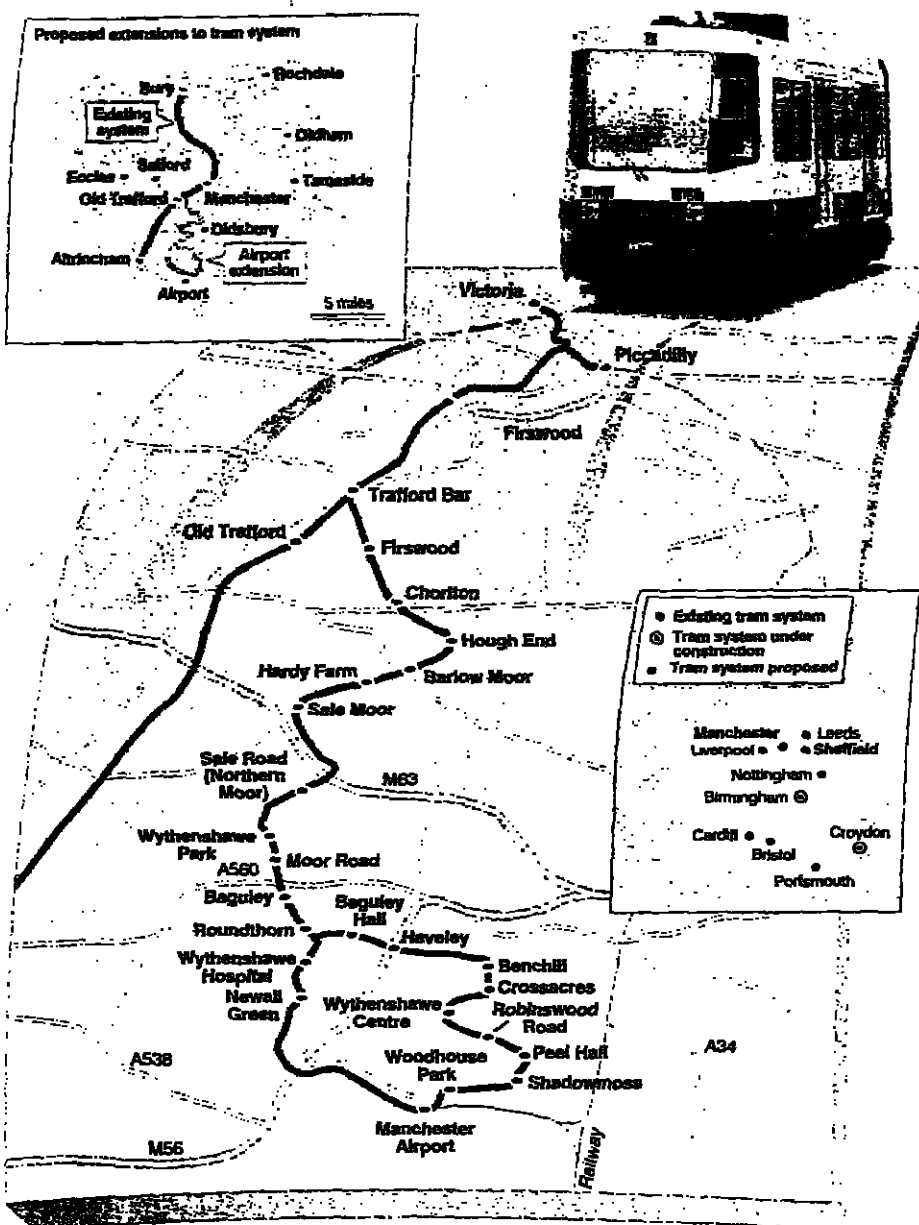
The airport extension will take up to four years to complete and will run along existing disused railway lines and roads. It will not begin until agreement has been reached on how to raise the money.

Funding is a complex mix of private and public with outside agencies finally appointed to run the service. The first proposed extension to Salford Quays, for example, will cost £10 million, of which £25 million will come from the local authorities, £17 million from the Government, £10 million from European and the remaining £5 million from private investors. The extension to the airport is expected to be similarly funded and work should start next year.

Once completed, the 30-minute journey is expected to attract eight million passengers a year and to take a million car journeys off the road annually.

Joe Clarke, chairman of the GMPTA, said: "This scheme, together with the airport's second runway, will be a terrific boost for the region, and we are delighted that we now have powers to build the extension."

"The new runway will attract even greater numbers of



travellers to Manchester and we are keen to encourage as many of those people as possible to use a form of transport other than the car to travel to and from Manchester airport."

The trams will stop at suburbs along the way, enabling thousands of airport staff to get to work by public

transport. A new station close to the existing rail main line is to be built with instant access to the terminals.

The airport's second runway now being built at a cost of £170 million, will make Manchester Britain's second busiest airport after Heathrow. Protesters have already set

up tree houses and other blockades designed to prevent what many activists regard as an environmental disaster.

But other big cities with regional airports are closely following the progress of Manchester's tramway links, which could prove a significant step towards an integrated transport policy.

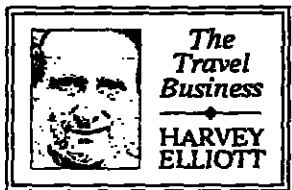
Rejoice in the great British break

A TELEVISION advertisement for Eurostar reveals a great deal about our attitudes to life in Britain. We obviously do not think much of it; we are convinced that they do things better abroad where we can certainly enjoy ourselves more, and we are ready to accept old-fashioned images of travelling around the home country.

In the television advertisement, a sophisticated traveller — you can tell he is sophisticated because he has a French accent — asks whether those watching would rather have lunch in Paris or in a motorway cafe.

The Paris restaurant is glamorous, filled with smiling people, efficient waiters and tempting dishes. Motorway service areas — and though it is not spelled out, it is obvious they are talking about motorways in Britain — are gloomy places with fat, ugly customers splashing tomato ketchup on plates of something and chips thrown disdainfully in front of our sophisticated by surly staff.

Eurostar has every right to woo customers to its fast, mo-



dern trains which can whizz to Paris and Brussels in a flash by comparing them with slower car journeys on congested roads. But what is surprising is that in the months that the ads have been shown Britain, no one has complained about the image they portray of this country's motorway catering.

As with much of Britain's tourism, entertainment and catering industry, the motorway stops have been transformed over the past few years, thanks to nearly £500 million worth of extensions and improvements. They will never be beautiful places and are unlikely to win Michelin stars for their cuisine. But they represent a fundamental change in the way Britain provides for visitors from overseas and those of us who live here.

I have often railed against the assumption that we can go on attracting more visitors each year without doing something about our lack of airport capacity, affordable hotel rooms and the despoliation of the most popular attractions.

But what we do have is a quite remarkable destination — the United Kingdom — with which foreigners seem delighted. They did, after all, spend £15 billion here last year and, despite the strengthening pound, millions more seem determined to come here on holiday.

As this week's Brit Awards showed, there is something about Britain which has a universal appeal to young people seeking fun and excitement. Then there are older people who want the calmness provided by what must be some of the finest countryside in the world or being in towns and cities redolent of centuries of history.

Yet still the grass seems greener on the other side of the Channel or the Atlantic. Every year ten million Britons take a package holiday to swelter in the heat, eat indifferent food, dance to inferior bands playing British music, struggle with a foreign language and convince themselves that only by travelling abroad can they have a real holiday.

Both political parties claim to have recognised the industry's importance to the economy and to be determined to help where they can. I suggest, for a start, that they stop meekly accepting images which suggest that "abroad" is always better, and start shouting back: "Britain's not bad either."

Channel ferry fares stabilise

THERE were signs of growing stability on cross-Channel ferry fares this week as two companies, Hoverspeed and Sea France, matched Le Shuttle on price.

The French-owned Sea France was the cheapest on the Channel last summer, cutting peak return fares to £95 on the Dover-Calais route. But while remaining competitive, the company has opted for safety first in copying the market leader Le Shuttle, which has a 40 per cent share of the Calais market from Dover and Folkestone.

Sea France is quoting peak returns of £183 for a car and driver, and £4 a passenger. For a car and five passengers, the fare works out at £199 — the same as Le Shuttle, which charges per vehicle.

Hoverspeed, meanwhile, is charging £198 for a car and five passengers from Dover to Calais at peak school holiday weekends. A car and driver can travel for £190.

But though Hoverspeed, Sea France and Le Shuttle are in line on price, they are still cheaper than P&O Ferries or Stena Line, which have quoted fares 30 per cent higher.

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Territorial ambitions: Hong Kong is expected to maintain its popularity with tourists

Britons rush to visit Hong Kong before July 1 handover

By TONY DAWE

HONG KONG is the favourite holiday destination outside Europe for British tourists, according to the annual report published this week by Kuoni, the leading long-haul tour operator.

The colony regained the top spot from Thailand, with 40 per cent more tourists flying there last year, and is expected to stay in the lead as people rush to visit before the July 1 handover to China.

Plans to promote tourism even after sovereignty has reverted to China are expected to maintain Hong Kong's popularity. Sue Biggs, the deputy managing director of Kuoni, says: "This is a very exciting time to visit Hong Kong and we are seeing an increasing demand both up to and beyond the handover to China."

"Bookings are a little slower for the immediate post-handover period, but we expect Hong Kong to pick up very quickly in late summer and retain its position as one of our top worldwide destinations."

However, the rush of tourists is expected to slow in future years as Kuoni is preparing to boost the number of holidays it offers to the fastest growing areas. In 1996, these included Egypt and Australia, which attracted twice as many tourists as the previous year, and Indonesia and Cuba, which also saw considerable growth.

"What Egypt and Australia have in common is a wide choice of multicentre holidays," Ms Biggs says. "The demand for these personalised flexible holidays, which must be immediately available, continues to grow apace."

The variety of single and multi-centre holidays available at competitive prices, plus island cruises and improved access to Bali with British Airways, led to the growth in popularity of Indonesia among British tourists. Cuba entered Kuoni's top 20 for the first time as new direct flights from Gatwick, good value for money and the blend of cultures and history attracted more visitors.

The report supports the findings of many adventure holiday companies that Latin America is becoming the trendy new destination. It says the time is right for Guatemala to become a holiday centre in its own right, instead of being tacked onto Mexico holidays, but says that high taxes are making Peru expensive.

The lack of variety and over-emphasis on all-inclusive hotels in St Lucia led to some tourists switching to Barbados, but St Lucia did retain its place as the number one wedding destination.

Sri Lanka dropped out of the top ten after bombs and continued fighting in the north of the island deterred tourists, but Ms Biggs reports that Britons are now returning.

Club Med swaps its beads for cards

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

ELECTRONIC smartcards are to replace the traditionally coloured beads used for paying bar bills at the 115 Club Med resorts around the world.

The beads — based on Polynesian barter beads and designed to remove the day to day problems of grappling with cash — come in three sizes and colours.

"We have been looking at new methods of payment for some years," a Club Med spokeswoman said yesterday. "We thought that we would get a hostile reaction from repeat customers who have a strong nostalgia for the beads. But in the three resorts in which we have run trials everyone appears to be very happy to use the smartcards."

From this summer, the brightly coloured cards will be bought by guests on arrival and at the resorts, electronically "loaded" to a chosen value that diminishes as it is swiped through a machine at the bar.

More than 1.4 million guests, known as *Gentils Membres* by Club Med staff, from around the world stay at Club Med resorts each year. They include 32,000 from Britain.

The first such resort was created by a Belgian and opened in 1950, but was taken over by the French Trigano family in 1954. Despite recent expansion and the growing popularity of all-inclusive holidays, the company plunged into the red last year with losses of more than £80 million.

That led to the end of the Trigano control, a boardroom shuffle and the appointment of Philippe Bourguignon, the chairman of Disneyland Paris, as chief executive.



Beauty and the beach: Bournemouth's traditional huts

Town starts seaside zones to help children

By JOHN HARRISON

A NEW scheme of colour-coded beaches called Kidzones is to be introduced in Bournemouth this summer to help small children who get lost.

From early May to early September, eight 200-yard stretches will be marked with bright banners, showing a simple symbol like a fish, ball or boat.

The idea was put forward by Kerri Evans, an 11-year-old Bournemouth schoolgirl. She wrote to the council and newspapers suggesting it after she had become separated from her sisters during a beach outing last summer.

"Every part of the beach looked the same — the same people, the same parasols, the same chalets," she said. "I knew my sisters must be there somewhere but didn't know whether I had walked past them or not. Eventually, I saw them but that night I was kept awake thinking how terrifying it would have been if I had

been younger and smaller. Then I thought of the idea of colour-coded markers."

In addition, hospital-style wrist tags in the same colours will be available for children from beach attendants and catering kiosks so that anyone spotting a lost child will be able to see where he has come from. Initially, 100,000 have been ordered, funded by the Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society, which is moving from London to Bournemouth.

"On a peak summer day our staff may have to deal with up to 50 lost children," says Ken Male, Bournemouth's head of tourism services. "Most are reunited within 30 minutes, though we had one seven-year-old who was not found for eight hours after he had wandered several miles along the beach. This scheme should speed up the process considerably and so lessen the trauma for everyone."

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NEWS

Labour maintains lead over Tories

Labour retains a commanding opinion poll lead over the Tories with only nine weeks to go to the probable election day of May 1, and ahead of its expected victory in the Wirral South by-election today.

The MORI poll for *The Times* puts Labour on 52 per cent, down three points since late January, while the Tories have gained one point to 31 per cent. No party has ever reversed such a big gap in so short a period before polling day. The Liberal Democrats are unchanged on the month at 11 per cent. Page 1

Howard's figures show 'prison works'

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, will next month unveil the fourth annual drop in recorded crime enabling the Government to enter the general election campaign on a strong law and order ticket. Page 1

Number cruncher

Up to half a million 14-year-olds will come to dread the voice of Maggie Marsh as she demands a response within ten seconds to arithmetic questions. Page 1

Blair's big breakfast

Tony Blair will claim that Labour is winning the economic argument as he addresses leaders of major companies at breakfast today. Page 1

Soames defiant

Armed Forces Minister Nicholas Soames rejected Labour calls for his resignation after a damning MoD report revealed how his officials had caused him to mislead Parliament over Gulf War syndrome. Page 2

Moyinhan's title

Colin Moyinhan beat the six-year-old son of a Filipina belly dancer in the legal battle to succeed the third Lord Moyinhan. Page 3

Tough on grammar

Fourteen-year-olds will take their most exacting grammar tests for 25 years in the Government's drive to ensure schools spend time teaching basics. Page 4

Child strangled

The body of nine-year-old Kayleigh Ward, missing since December, has been found on a riverbank. She had been sexually assaulted and may have been sexually assaulted. Page 5

Spears throw light on Man the hunter

The world's oldest hunting spears, dating back some 400,000 years, have been found at a coal mine in Germany. The find destroys the argument of some scholars that modern Man began purposeful hunting less than 100,000 years ago. Bones found with the spears include those of extinct species of elephant, rhinoceros, bear, as well as red deer. Page 11

Bar defeats bid

The Bar and the senior judiciary combined to kill off the Lord Chancellor's attempt to end barristers' monopoly of jury trials. Page 6

MPs' earning power

The amount MPs earn from outside interests appears to be inversely related to their ability. With only a few exceptions, the top-earning MPs are among its less talented members. Page 9

Yeltsin's gambit

Moscow braced itself for a major reshuffle amid rumours that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin could be ousted as President Yeltsin takes steps to reassert his grip. Page 13

Fears at Lufthansa

Lufthansa, the German airline, edged closer to a pilots' strike. The pilots want more money and are uneasy about job security as the airline gears up for full privatisation this year. Page 12

Vanunu plea rejected

President Weizmann ruled out any mercy for Mordechai Vanunu, saying the former nuclear technician was a traitor. Page 14

'Hotel' White House

It has emerged that President Clinton was the driving force behind a plan to reward wealthy donors to his campaign with an invitation to stay at the 'Hotel' White House. Page 15



Lord Lloyd-Webber before the ceremony to introduce him into the Lords with his sponsors, the Lords Owen, left, and Palumbo. Page 1

BUSINESS

Inflation: Britain would comfortably beat a new target measure of consumer price inflation introduced yesterday by the European Union. Page 25

Barclays: The high street bank failed in its attempts yesterday to buy back £300 million of its own shares on the stockmarket. Page 25

Trade unions: The trade unions said yesterday that they were ready to take steps to minimise strikes and work in partnership with a new Government. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 15.4 points to close at 4329.3. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 98.0 to 98.6 after a fall from \$1.6342 to \$1.6338 but a rise from DM2.7386 to DM2.7587. Page 28

SPORT

Football: Roy Hodgson is to leave Internazionale at the end of the season to become manager of Blackburn Rovers, whose attempts to sign Sven Goran Eriksson fell through last week. Page 48

Rugby union: Five nations' championship matches played in Wales, Scotland and Ireland will continue to be broadcast by the BBC for the next three years. Page 48

Cricket: England tied the third one-day international against New Zealand in Napier after Darren Gough scrambled a bye from the final ball. Page 46

Racing: Richard Dunwoody has been chosen to replace the injured Adrian Maguire on three plum rides for the David Nicholson stable at Cheltenham. Page 43

ARTS

Gangster wrap: Michael Caine talks about his 'labour of love', a small role playing a dying gangster alongside his friend Jack Nicholson in *Blood and Wine*. Page 36

Portrait painter: Geoff Brown reviews the week's big cinema releases, from Jane Campion's *The Portrait of a Lady*, starring Nicole Kidman, to Nicholas Hytner's *The Crucible*. Page 37

Sensational studies: Classic dances by British ballerinas defining choreographers, Frederick Ashton and Kenneth MacMillan, are revived by Birmingham. Page 38

Gender benders: A woman plays King Lear in a show which fails to get for other reasons, and *The Slow Drag* tells a real-life story of a man with a 40-year sex secret. Page 39

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

POP: U2's *Pop* is resourceful, rewarding and intelligent — but is it a great album?

SECOND DEGREE: The Times postgraduate service: thousands of courses in the 36-page special supplement

Rival camps

The honouring of Lord Bagri and Lord Paul shows how important the Asian vote will be in this election. Page 17

Dr Thomas Stuttaford looks at the Government's guide to healthy eating: HRT and preventing cataracts; does arthritis stop Alzheimer's?; and schizophrenia. Page 16

Ding ding: Trams are the success of the 1990s. Manchester is to build a line to its airport and other towns are studying schemes. Page 23

Bargains of the week: Jamaica at a discount. Amsterdam for the young from £67 — and lots of Easter offers. Page 22

BOOKS

Timely tales: Peter Ackroyd studies time; Martin Bell on Western Islam; Karen Armstrong on a visionary apostle; Robert Skidelsky looks at a moral cure. Pages 40, 41

THE PAPERS

How can one imagine that Greek Cypriots alone will join the European Union, leaving in the shadows their Turkish compatriots who should be the main beneficiaries of membership? A solution must be found. This implies that [Greece] should not climb onto its high horse at the slightest instigation. — *La Libre Belgique*

Preview: Jack Davenport and Juliet Aubrey star in a tale of unhappy families. *Catherine Cookson's The Moth* (ITV, 9pm) Review: Lynne Truss on a colourful look at an African vegetable. Page 47

Double trouble

In the age of innocence that preceded the splitting of the atom, scientific knowledge was seen as a power for good, its promise unclouded by the fears and ethical dilemmas that have since come crowding in. Page 19

An incomplete defence

Procedure, as well as personnel, has been found wanting by the Mottram report. Page 19

Shaved bulls

A sport that now matches heavy-weight boxing for sheer corruption and gimmickry is no longer that which moved Hemingway to his prose. Page 19

WILLIAM REES-MOGG

Public health expenditure is more or less the same in Britain and other advanced countries. The shortfall in the private sector in the United Kingdom: that is only about 15 per cent the size of the American, 70 per cent the size of the European, and 27 per cent of the OECD average. Page 18

MAGNUS LINKLATER

Andrew Neil has promised that *The Scotsman* will remain committed to devolution. But if over the next few weeks he knocks away the pillars that support it, there may not be much of a structure to recommend to his readers when it comes to the vote. Page 18

DEBATES

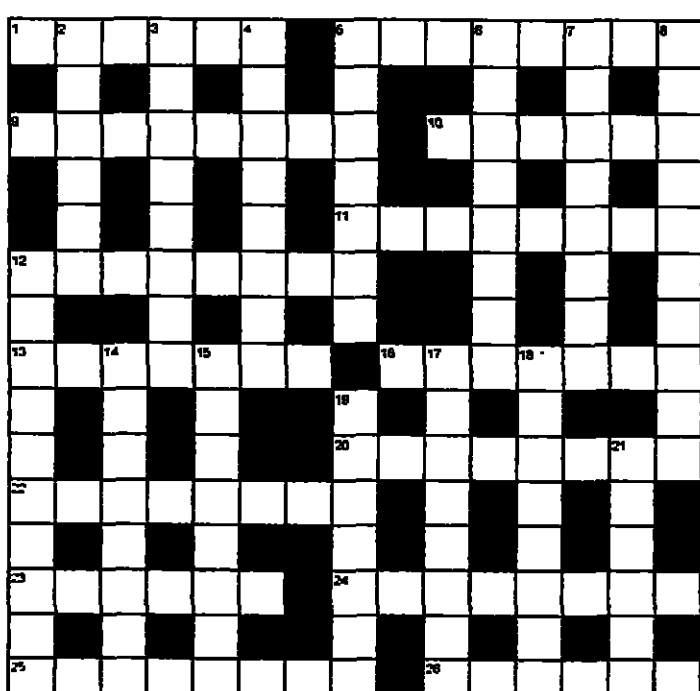
The Countess of Wicklow, former Irish Senator; Tony Williams, jazz drummer; Phyllis Deakin, former Times reporter. Page 21

LETTERS

Taking issue with the Chief Rabbi: too many EU rules; struggle to fund museum awards; myth of job insecurity; wreck of the slave ship; animal traps; Beatrix Potter; Dickens statue. Page 19

2, 34, 36, 38, 44, 46. Bonus: 40
The guaranteed jackpot is £7 million

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,414



ACROSS

- 1 Notice weakness in tip (6).
- 5 Around spring, abandon expedition (8).
- 9 Sweet view of Hereford through this (5-3).
- 10 Doctor introducing endless pain, frightening woman (6).
- 11 Principal backing scholar with sanity restored (8).
- 12 Late with a piece of writing — missing this? (8).
- 13 This fruit makes a sound present (7).
- 16 Remedy for a case of broken guitar strings? (7).
- 20 Community leader has urge to imbibe port (8).
- 22 Shady technique shown by footballer from South-West? (4-4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,413

VERNALEQUINOX
2 M N A A G
LOWRELIEF RONDO
G E R N Y T M
ADRIE EVOT WHAM
R A N C V T O
FLOREST KNEEPA
R E J R P O
ANNUALS COMPEER
C O N O A I G
TAXI QUIN COBRA
T J P O E A R
ZONE COMPLAINT
N U E O L T E
SPRINGCHICKEN

DOWN

- 23 Shutter that descends automatically when one is out (6).
- 24 Vehicle badly functioning, given a series of clangers (8).
- 25 To imperil on purpose is a deadly sin (8).
- 26 Set for end of fourth scene of *As You Like It* (6).
- 2 For example, make one pair bid at bridge (6).
- 3 One of us, say, who lives in detached home? (8).
- 4 Chance for political change, putting up with the other side (8).
- 5 Fear about contracting illness sensed unconsciously (7).
- 6 Final resting place glimpsed over the mountains (8).
- 7 Co-operating to put rope round mount? (8).
- 8 Author of *11 Kings* (5,5).
- 12 Girl wearing scrap could be Olympic competitor (10).
- 14 Hire a lad to work at end of track (8).
- 15 European courts accept American submission at last (8).
- 17 Soldier, look up to cunning leader with few equals (8).
- 18 Sapper's work is to make stream go into the river (8).
- 19 Money sister keeps in jacket (7).
- 21 Stern leader's coup (6).

Times Two Crossword, page 48

AA INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions
AA Weather - All regions 0336 444 910
UK Roads - All regions 0336 401 410
Roadside P25 0336 401 746
P25 and Link Roads 0336 401 747
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HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day time: Hum, Dorset, 10C (50F); Lowest: Haze, Dorset, 1C (34F); Highest rainfall: Buxton, Derbyshire, 0.6in; Highest sunshine: Eastbourne, East Sussex, 9.9h.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

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Temperatures at midday local time. X = not available

FORECAST

General: England and Wales: many places will have a clear, frosty start. Cloud already streaming in from Cornwall and Pembrokeshire will quickly spread north and east, bringing rain to Wales, the West Midlands and northern England, although perhaps not the far north-east, by midday. The afternoon will see the rain clearing.
Scotland and Northern Ireland: a dry, clear frosty start will quickly give way to cloud. Rain already in the west of the province will spread rapidly eastwards to all parts, reaching Aberdeenshire and Shetland by evening. Heavy rain is likely as well as snow on hills.
London, SE England, E Anglia, Central S England, Midlands, E England, Channel Isles, SW England, Central N: frosty start. Becoming cloudy, staying mainly dry, brighter later. Winds moderate, southwest. Mild. Max 12C (54F).
Wales, NW England, Lake District, NE England: rather cloudy, rain spreading from southwest, sleet in places. Brighter later. Wind strong, southerly. Mild. Max 10C (50F).
Isle of Man, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Argyll, NW Scotland: frosty start then heavy rain spreading from southwest. Snow in places; patchy rain later. Winds strong to gale, southerly. Cold. Max 8C (48F).
Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: clear and frosty. Sunny morning. Clouding, rain in afternoon, clearing later. Winds strong to gale, southerly. Mild. Max 7C (45F).
Northern Ireland: cloudy and wet, becoming patchier and drier. Winds strong to gale, southerly. Cold. Max 9C (48F).
Outlook: wet tomorrow; brighter on Saturday.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Aberdeen	5.2	0.01	8	46	5	0.05	12	54	8
Anglophone	3.0	0.08	9	45	10	0.05	11	52	8
London	0.8	0.28	7	45	10	0.05	10	50	8
Lowestoft	1.7	0.01	4	38	10	0.05	7	45	8
Belmont	0.1	0.1	1	46	10	0.05	12	52	8
Birmingham	3.1	0.23	9	46	10	0.05	11	52	8
Southampton	0.1	0.1	1	46	10	0.05	12	52	8
Bournemouth	7.5	0.17	12	54	10	0.05	6	43	8
Bristol	7.5	0.08	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Buxton	1.0	0.08	9	41	10	0.05	11	52	8
Cardiff	6.9	0.04	10	50	10	0.05	10	50	8
Chesham	1.0	0.08	9	41	10	0.05	11	52	8
Colwyn Bay	10.1	0.14	8	46	10	0.05	10	50	8
Cromer	1.6	0.19	10	49	10	0.05	11	52	8
Eastbourne	9.9	0.08	10	50	10	0.05	10	50	8
Edinburgh	0.1	0.10	4	39	10	0.05	11	52	8
Exeter	6.1	0.18	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Falmouth	3.0	0.03	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Farnham	2.4	0.04	9	48	10	0.05	10	50	8
Folkestone	7.4	0.09	12	54	10	0.05	10	50	8
Glasgow	0.6	0.08	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Guernsey	1.5	0.20	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Hastings	6.8	0.01	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Hayling I.	1.0	0.08	9	41	10	0.05	11	52	8
Hove	7.0	0.1	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Huddersfield	3.0	0.11	9	48	10	0.05	10	50	8
Jersey	1.2	0.08	7	46	10	0.05	11	52	8
Leamington	3.7	0.12	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Leeds	2.1	0.22	9	48	10	0.05	10	50	8
Leicester	3.0	0.01	3	37	10	0.05	10	50	8
Leuchars	0.2	0.08	9	41	10	0.05	11	52	8
Liverpool	5.4	0.05	12	54	10	0.05	10	50	8
London	2.7	0.2	8	46	10	0.05	10	50	8
Lowestoft	5.5	0.08	10	50	10	0.05	10	50	8
Manchester	0.3	0.35	7	45	10	0.05	10	50	8
Margate	0.1	0.1	1	46	10	0.05	12	52	8
Miraflores	6.2	0.03	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8
Morecambe	2.0	0.27	7	44	10	0.05	10	50	8
Newcastle	0.1	0.16	6	43	10	0.05	10	50	8
Newquay	6.4	0.10	10	50	10	0.05	10	50	8
Northwich	2.8	0.10	9	48	10	0.05	10	50	8
Orford	4.3	0.32	10	50	10	0.05	10	50	8
Portsmouth	0.7	0.03	8	43	10	0.05	10	50	8
Preston	3.5	0.35	7	45	10	0.05	10	50	8
Reading	3.5	0.20	9	48	10	0.05	10	50	8
Scarborough	1.4	0.22	7	45	10	0.05	10	50	8
Sharncliffe	3.9	0.11	9	48	10	0.05	10	50	8
Shrewsbury	2.2	0.18	9	48	10	0.05	10	50	8
Southport	1.1	0.24	7	45	10	0.05	10	50	8
Southwick	4.4	0.05	12	54	10	0.05	10	50	8
Stamford	0.7	0.03	8	43	10	0.05	10	50	8
Swansea	6.0	0.13	12	54	10	0.05	10	50	8
Swindon	0.3	0.15	9	43	10	0.05	10	50	8
Torquay	1.6	0.17	12	54	10	0.05	10	50	8
Wetherby	7.8	0.07	10	50	10	0.05	10	50	8
Widnes	4.9	0.11	11	52	10	0.05	10	50	8

THE TIMES

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TODAY



JANET BUSH

Gordon Brown
sells Labour to our
economics editor
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Britain's
big investment
in people
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SPORT

Olazabal puts
best foot
forward in Dubai
PAGES 43-48

TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 27 1997

Pace in second warning as chief departs

By ERIC REGULY

PACE Micro Technology, the TV set-top box maker, was plunged into turmoil yesterday when it issued its second profits warning in less than a month and announced that Barry Rubery, the joint chief executive, had departed because of friction created by his management style.

The warning sent the shares diving to 86p, down 71p. Pace has now lost half its £369 million market value since its flotation last summer at 172p a share.

Peter Morgan, chairman, said that Mr Rubery's departure had nothing to do with the strategic direction of Pace or its sagging order book. He said: "We are talking about fundamental and irreconcilable differences in management style."

Mr Rubery, who helped to launch Pace in 1982 with David Hood, the other half of the chief executive team, could not be reached for comment. He has resigned all his positions and is not thought to have secured another job.

Mr Rubery sold shares worth £45 million at the time of the Pace flotation, which cut his stake from 26 per cent to just under 10 per cent. In the last financial year, he earned £392,000 in salary, performance bonus and benefits.

Mr Morgan said that no decisions have been made on Mr Rubery's exit package. His compensation, if any, will be revealed in Pace's annual report in August or September.

Pace said that the profit warning was triggered by continued uncertainties about launch dates for various satellite broadcasting services around the world, notably in Brazil, Mexico and Italy. As a result, second-half profits are expected to be "no better" than those in the first half.

Investors were also disappointed that Pace had no orders for digital set-top boxes from BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster that is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*. BSkyB, however, has yet to place any firm orders with any set-top box maker. "We don't know anything that indicates we will be excluded from the Sky order," Mr Morgan said.

Pace earlier this month said order forecasts in some markets had been too high. Mr Morgan said Pace's falling was judging clients' forecasts uncritically.



Sir Richard Evans, chief executive of BAe, which is in a strong position with a record order book of £19.4 billion at the end of last year

BAe confident of single currency membership

By OLIVER AUGUST

BRITISH Aerospace, one of Britain's leading exporters, is convinced that the next government will join a European single currency, irrespective of who wins the general election.

Sir Richard Evans, chief executive, said the main political parties were striking Euro-sceptical notes to appease fringe supporters, but remain committed to securing British membership of monetary union.

He said: "What's going on at the moment is politics. There is no question about Britain not joining. The Labour position and the Tory position will be the same after

the election because the drivers are the same."

BAe and other exporters have been lobbying for British membership that would iron out exchange rate fluctuations and help to reduce the financial risks of selling products to foreign clients.

BAe's defence business is particularly sensitive to fluctuations of European currencies. While civilian aircraft are priced in dollars, military aircraft are billed in the currencies in which the costs have been incurred.

Sir Richard dismissed suggestions that a merger with GEC was secretly being prepared. He emphasised BAe's commitment to driving forward the consolidation of the

European aerospace and defence industry as a whole.

Although Labour is committed to undertaking a defence policy review, BAe expects no major changes and said that if elected Labour may offer new opportunities. Industry observers view the party as more sympathetic to large-scale mergers, such as the BAe-GEC deal under discussion.

BAe's 1996 financial results, announced yesterday, show a huge cash pile of £726 million, which would make a frontal assault by BAe on GEC at least possible, even though such a move is still more likely to happen in reverse.

The full-year results show that BAe is in a stronger position than it has been for

years. The order book stood at a record £19.4 billion on December 31. Profits from defence sales, which make up two-thirds of BAe's business, have risen further, while the once huge losses in commercial aerospace have been almost eliminated.

Pre-tax profits rose from £234 million to £425 million. Earnings per share stood at 67.1p, compared with 27.4p. The dividend, due to be paid on June 2, rose to 15.625p from 12.5p. The profit increase was driven by the defence business, where sales were up 18 per cent to £5.4 billion and pre-tax profits rose 14 per cent to £553 million.

The group said: "The trend towards more sophisticated and cost-effective programmes is placing increased emphasis on prime contracting and system integration skills." The group is the prime contractor in most of the major deals it is involved in.

BAe said that the market for large commercial aircraft had improved strongly and further growth was expected. The demand for regional jet airliners had also improved, while the regional turboprop airliner market remained poor.

The group did not rule out shutting down its turboprop operations at Prestwick. Airbus, in which BAe is a 20 per cent partner, won firm orders for 301 planes last year, compared with 87 in 1995.

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Barclays buyback suffers setback

By ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT



Taylor encouraged

THE bid by Barclays to return excess capital to its shareholders through a buyback scheme hit an unexpected snag yesterday. The bank mopped up a mere nine million shares for £100 million.

Barclays, which last week reported a 13 per cent rise in annual pre-tax profits to £2.4 billion, had set aside up to £300 million for the present buyback with a possible £200 million more to come during the year. Taking into account previous buybacks, Barclays has now returned more than £1 billion of capital to shareholders.

In an intense two-and-a-half hour trading period yesterday BZW, the investment banking arm of Barclays, together with Cazenove, the broker, man-

aged to buy back nine million shares at 1137.27p each.

Two reasons were offered for the bank's lack of success. One was that the institutions wanted to get as high a price as possible for selling their shares while the bank wanted to be seen as being "prudent" with shareholders' money.

A more likely explanation, however, is that special tax breaks for buybacks are no longer available having been scrapped last autumn. The slow take-up yesterday has implications for other companies taking the same route.

Shares of Barclays closed at £1.27, up 5p. The buyback is the bank's fourth repurchase of shares, but differs from previous ones in that BZW and

brokers Cazenove are buying the shares as principals rather than as agents for the company. Accordingly, normal UK tax rules for selling shares in the market will generally apply, rather than special rules which apply to direct repurchase of shares by a company.

Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, said: "It is encouraging in many ways that there are not enough sellers of the shares at the current price to enable us to complete our planned purchase. We remain committed to returning capital to our shareholders and shall be looking to buy further shares as appropriate."

Pennington, page 27

Unions lay claim to future role as partners in power

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

TRADE unions said yesterday that they were ready to take steps to minimise strikes and work in partnership with a new Government.

Their offer, welcomed by business leaders, was nominally directed at any incoming government. Union leaders said they looked forward to working with an administration that faced the "massive task" of repairing the "damage done" to Britain over the last 18 years and one that was not hostile to unions.

The TUC's governing general council yesterday approved a pre-election statement of priorities for government on behalf of Britain's 7.3 million union members. It offers a partnership aimed at improving the UK's economic efficiency, industrial competi-

teness and workplace fairness.

Insisting that unions would now be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem, the TUC's 25-page statement, called *Partners for Progress*, is a thorough rejection of many of the unions' policy positions taken in previous general elections.

It endorses policies that would lead to steady and stable economic growth and a "tight control" of inflation, stressing that good quality and secure jobs require companies that are "prosperous, profitable and competitive".

The TUC specifically turns away from pay as a priority to jobs, seeing employment as central to any partnership with a new government — though it goes beyond Labour

when it sets out as a medium-term economic objective of a "return to full and fair employment". The unions also go beyond Labour's plans for a Low Pay Commission, recommending a statutory minimum wage level. The float the idea of holding "wider discussions" on the economy, including debate about the "use of resources and the need to ensure that growth, including of incomes, is in line with what the country can afford".

While TUC leaders explicitly rejected any talk of old-style incomes policies with an incoming government, they hinted at new bargaining arrangements for public sector employees. The Confederation of British Industry welcomed the TUC document, with reservations.

Britain surpasses EU inflation target

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

KENNETH CLARKE and Gordon Brown may be squabbling about who is better equipped to tackle inflation but, according to a new measure of inflation being introduced by the European Union, both men would currently meet the 2.5 per cent target with ease.

The harmonised index of consumer prices (HICP), which was published for the first time yesterday, placed annual inflation in January at 2.2 per cent — well below the official UK headline figure of 2.8 per cent. The Chancellor immediately hailed the new figure as evidence that the inflation target is being met "steadily and surely".

The EU measure has been developed to allow a better comparison of inflation rates and to determine the inflation

convergence criteria for a single currency.

The HICP is lower than the retail price index (RPI) normally used in Britain because it excludes measures of owner-occupier housing and council tax — both, historically, prone to inflation. The HICP also includes measures not in the RPI, such as personal computers, new cars and air fares.

The Office for National Statistics, which prepared the new inflation figure for the EU, was quick to emphasise yesterday that the new measure was not intended to be used by politicians looking to improve their inflation track record, or by companies keen to keep down annual pay deals. It said that RPI remains the best indicator of the UK's consumer price inflation.

Strong pound still has to hit exports

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE TRADE deficit narrowed unexpectedly in December, according to figures published yesterday, suggesting that the rise in sterling has not yet hurt exporters.

The global trade deficit declined from £1.04 billion in November to £854 million in December, against market expectations of a £1.1 billion gap.

The deficit with non-EU countries in January also showed an improvement, falling from £640 million to £400 million, as export volumes showed a record 13 per cent monthly rise after falling 6.5 per cent in December.

The full-year figures showed a widening of the deficit to £12.5 billion from £11.6 billion in 1995. This is the fourteenth consecutive year that the country has run a trade deficit.

The improvement was principally driven by strong oil exports, which produced a surplus of £700 million, compared with £400 million the previous month — the highest surplus for ten years. But the underlying deficit rose to £1.94 billion from £1.66 billion — the largest gap in more than six years.

Economists said the figures suggested that most exporters were holding prices to maintain volumes and that as a consequence the rise in sterling was yet to bite. The trade deficit is also likely to be flattered in the next few months as import prices fall more sharply than export prices because of the impact of the pound. Import prices declined 2.5 per cent in the fourth quarter, compared with a fall of 1.5 per cent in export prices.

Most economists believe that the trade gap will start to widen later in the year as export volumes continue to slow.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET		
FTSE 100	4328.3	(-15.4)
Yield	3.65%	
FTSE All share	2115.81	(-5.81)
Nickel	18990.92	(-78.15)
New York		
Dow Jones	6873.55	(-64.85)
S&P Composite	804.40	(-7.83)

US RATES		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	96 1/8%	(96 1/8%)
Yield	6.75%	(6.65%)

LONDON MONEY		
3-month interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
12-month bill	112 1/8%	(113 1/8%)

STERLING		
New York	1.6340*	(1.6355)
London	1.6338	(1.6342)
DM	2.7599	(2.7386)
FF	8.3103	(8.2375)
Sfr	2.4119	(2.3900)
Yen	199.45	(198.36)
£ Index	98.6	(98.0)

DOLLAR		
DM	1.6870*	(1.6723)
FF	5.8228*	(5.8410)
Sfr	1.4785	(1.4810)
Yen	121.80*	(121.60)
£ Index	103.6	(103.2)

NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (May)	\$19.15	(\$19.20)

GOLD		
London close	\$355.65	(\$353.45)

* denotes midday trading price

Pru battle

Prudential Corporation, one of five bidders for Scottish Amicable, said it is still considering whether to amend its £1.9 billion offer for the mutual insurer ahead of tomorrow's deadline.

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Commercial Union, page 30

Atonement

The chairman of Sumitomo Corporation has resigned to atone for the \$2.6 billion of losses suffered on copper trading.

Page 30, Pennington 27

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Job growth by Jabil in Scotland

A US firm is creating 500 jobs by expanding its operations in Scotland's "silicon glen".

Jabil Circuit, which makes circuit boards for computers, is investing £20 million in its operations at Livingston. At present, it employs 500 people at plants in Livingston and nearby Bathgate.

A new facility currently being built in Livingston will employ a total of 1,000. It is to be opened this summer. Staff from existing plants will move there. Jabil opened its base in Scotland four years ago.

Inveresk gain

More stable pulp prices pulled Inveresk, the paper producer, back into profit to offset a £2.78 million loss in the first half of 1996. The company made a second-half pre-tax profit of £5.28 million — its best for any six-month period. However, full-year pre-tax profits were £2.5 million, down from £8.29 million. The dividend is held at 5.7p, with a final 3.8p.

Mayflower up

Mayflower, the vehicle bodies producer, lifted pre-tax profits to £17.9 million, from £7.1 million, last year. A £4.8 million restructuring helped margins to rise from 7.7 per cent to 8.7 as two US operations were integrated. A 1.5p final dividend makes 2.25p (2p).

Wife costs job

Louis De Bievre, a director of ABN Amro, the biggest bank in The Netherlands, has resigned because his wife, in 1992, traded in a company's shares while aware of information based upon remarks by him.

Brewin ahead

Pre-tax profits of Brewin Dolphin, the stockbroker and fund manager, rose by 19 per cent, to £5 million, last year. The total dividend rises to 8p, from 7p, with a final 5.5p. The improvement came in spite of costs of adapting to Crest share settlement.

Prudential ponders price of bid for Scottish Amicable

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

PRUDENTIAL Corporation said yesterday it was still considering whether to amend its £1.9 billion bid for Scottish Amicable, the mutual life insurer, before tomorrow's deadline.

Sir Peter Davis, chief executive of Prudential, said the company had "a respected brand name and significant presence in the independent financial adviser market in the UK and, if successful, the acquisition would enhance our core UK operations".

Five bidders have signed confidentiality agreements allowing them access to Scottish Amicable's financial details. NatWest has dropped out and the remaining parties include Prudential, Abbey National and AMP of Australia. Sir Peter said that although the Scottish Amicable bid was a priority, he was still interested in buying a building society. But he believed societies were currently at "a high price".

Prudential's full-year results, out yesterday, show that the group has plenty of spare cash to fund its acquisition programme. The sale of Mercantile & General to Swiss Re last year helped to push pre-tax profit up 14 per cent to £691 million, leaving the insurer with £1.1 billion net cash.

The profit on the M&G Re disposal came to £766 million and Prudential has decided to increase the total dividend payable to shareholders by 10 per cent to 17.3p per share.

Prudential said talks with the Department of Trade and

Industry over the distribution of its surplus "orphan" assets were continuing. Jonathan Bloomer, group finance director, said he did not believe the DTI's recent agreement with Britannic Assurance over orphans would set a precedent. "Every case is different and we are still going forward with our talks," he said.

Overall, single premium sales were almost 70 per cent ahead of 1995 and regular premium products were up 13 per cent. In Prudential UK, operating profit from the insurance business rose 8 per cent to £398 million. Sales of savings and investment products were 71 per cent ahead at £3.6 billion for single premiums and 8 per cent up at £303 million for regular premiums.

Prudential Banking, which was launched in October, cost £54 million to set up, and Mr Bloomer said it was not likely to make a profit until 1999.

Jackson National Life, Prudential's US operation, lifted profit 35 per cent to \$512 million. There was a \$30 million improvement after an unusually high payment in 1995 to a US investors' compensation scheme was not repeated.

Prudential also said it was adding a record £1.9 billion of bonuses to its UK customers' policies. Total bonus rates on savings products are being maintained at 8.25 per cent, while total bonus rates credited to personal pensions have been increased 0.25 points to 9.75 per cent.



Jonathan Bloomer, left, and Sir Peter Davis reported a 14 per cent advance in profits

NAO praises sale of residual shares

By ADAM JONES

THE Government's handling of the sale of its leftover privatisation shareholdings has been praised by the National Audit Office (NAO).

After the major privatisations of the 1980s and 1990s, the Treasury was left with minority shareholdings in more than 30 privatised companies. The portfolio was

worth about £1.1 billion in 1995. Under the advice of N.M. Rothschild & Sons, sales to bolster privatisation receipts began with the disposal of £514 million of BP shares in December 1995.

BAA shares worth £145 million were sold in January 1996, followed by £15 million in British Airways shares. Sales of several minor holdings boosted the proceeds to £675 million for the 1995-96 financial year and residual shares in utility companies an extra £99 million in April and June 1996.

The NAO said the Government realised "good" to "exceptional" value in the sales, despite the inherent risk of share prices falling when the market spies a big seller.

Two charged with money laundering

TWO Italian nationals have appeared before the City of London Magistrates' Court charged with money laundering offences.

Sergeant Charles Owen, of the City of London Police, said Nicola Rocco, 62, and Giuseppe Rocco, 32, his son, both of Avellino, Italy, face charges relating to the control of, and attempted transfer of, more than £250,000 held in a City bank account.

It is alleged that the cash is the proceeds of a fraud and was held in a company account under the name of RGL.

The two men, who were arrested after an investigation by the Financial Investigation Unit, were remanded in custody until next Monday.

Fight is urged on investors' rights

By ROBERT MILLER

THE multibillion-pound rights issue market, by which UK companies raise cash, yesterday dominated the opening day of a pension fund conference for managers of £370 billion of assets.

Graham Allen, chairman of the National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF), told delegates at Eastbourne that they should fight to safeguard shareholders' rights before agreeing to changes in the rights issue market. Reforms have been proposed by the 100 Group of finance directors of Britain's top companies.

The 100 Group argues that costs of rights issues, generally reckoned to be 2 per cent of funds raised, could be cut by

introducing a book-building process. This idea, widely used in the US, involves companies making presentations to existing shareholders and potential new investors, with those wishing to participate then indicating how much of the issue they will take up.

The NAPF fears that big and small investors alike may lose "pre-emptive rights" now protected by the Companies Act, which says existing shareholders must have first refusal on rights issue subscriptions.

Mr Allen said: "We are not yet convinced that book-building will, in all cases, prove to be a cheaper method of capital raising."

City Diary, page 29

Drugs company in need of a tonic

PHARMACIA AND UPJOHN, the drugs company formed through a \$13 billion merger of American and Swedish companies in 1995, yesterday reported a fall in net profit to \$562 million last year, from \$739 million, because of merger costs and other non-recurring items. The company, which is run from corporate headquarters in London, said fourth quarter earnings were \$226 million after non-recurring items, compared with \$38 million in 1995.

The company said that in the full year non-recurring items totalled \$436 million, up from \$201 million in 1995. Before non-recurring items the 1996 net profit was \$998 million, up slightly from \$940 million in 1995. Jan Ekberg, acting president and chief executive, said: "We were satisfied with our fourth-quarter earnings per share. However, margin improvements were not up to expectations, and we have many challenges ahead." Last year, net sales rose 3 per cent to \$7.18 billion, from \$6.95 billion. The strengthening of the dollar, particularly against the Japanese yen, reduced the net sales by about 2 per cent, the company said.

Fraud detection survey

COMPANY finance directors want external auditors to do more to detect fraud within their organisations, a new survey shows today. The poll by Reed Accountancy Personnel, the recruitment firm, found that companies want auditors to develop a greater understanding of the business and offer advice on how controls could be improved. David Callaghan, a Reed director, said: "The public see external audit as a guarantee that no fraud exists within an organisation whereas, in reality, this is not the case. Many organisations would like to see more done by external auditors to detect fraud but only as long as the additional work created by such a move was contained within current fee scales."

Guardearely winding-up

THE Department of Trade and Industry has successfully applied to the courts for a provisional winding-up order to be issued against Guardearely Ltd, trading as Freedom International, a money circulation scheme. Hundreds of investors were persuaded to part with a signing-on fee of £2,600 and recoup their outlay by recruiting other members. Michael Pugh, the Official Receiver, has been appointed as provisional liquidator to the scheme, which was based in Stoke-on-Trent, until a full hearing on April 9.

Towry Law trims losses

TOWRY LAW, the independent financial adviser, reduced pre-tax losses to £1.1 million from £4.2 million in the half year to December 31. Turnover rose 12 per cent to £7.56 million. Costs, however, increased 6 per cent to £9.05 million as a result of additional recruitment, training, and marketing activities. There is again no interim dividend. The company also increased the amount set aside to cover costs associated with the pension transfer and opt out review in the wake of the mis-selling scandal by £100,000 to £500,000.

JLI approach

JLI, the food processing and snacks company, has been approached by at least one potential bidder, it revealed yesterday. The news caused its shares to jump 25 per cent from 56p to 70p. The company announced in November that it would close Tee Gee Snacks, the nut company based in Leeds, after the subsidiary made an operating loss of £1.6 million in the first half. The company set aside £9.2 million to cover the closure, including £4.9 million in goodwill write-offs, sending it into the red with an £8.8 million pre-tax loss.

Fall for Frank Usher

DISAPPOINTING early orders for Frank Usher's autumn-winter women's wear collection hit profits and sales in the six months to November 30. Pre-tax profits fell 7.9 per cent to £1.05 million on turnover which was 4 per cent lower at £10.54 million. Earnings fell 11.8 per cent to 9.7p a share (11p), but the interim dividend is held at 4p, payable on April 3. Christopher Norland, chairman, said increased orders for the new spring-summer collection meant that profit for the whole of the year should at least equal last year's.

Bank		Bank		Bank	
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.25	2.24	0.658	0.653	0.833
Belgium Fr	20.15	18.55	3.212	2.827	2.827
Canada C\$	58.15	54.85	2.48	2.27	2.27
Denmark Kr	2.585	2.185	11.40	10.50	10.50
France Fr	0.945	0.735	284.50	285.00	285.00
Germany DM	10.97	10.17	7.82	7.02	7.02
Italy Lira	8.70	8.05	242.00	225.00	225.00
Japan Yen	9.58	8.94	12.75	11.95	11.95
Spain Ptas	2.55	2.57	2.51	2.53	2.53
Switzerland Fr	4.44	4.18	206.00	192.00	192.00
UK £	1.25	1.25	1.732	1.802	1.802
US \$	1.00	1.00			
Notes for small denomination bank notes supplied by Barclays Bank. Other rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates at close of trading yesterday.					

Non-executive board pay up 25%

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

NON-EXECUTIVE directors are now earning up to an average of £25,000 per directorship, a rise of up to 25 per cent on fees a year ago, according to new boardroom research findings today.

The survey of remuneration by Monks Partnership, the boardroom pay specialists, shows that among the smallest and largest financial sector companies, non-executive fees

have risen by one quarter over the past year. They have risen in the smallest industrial companies too, although in larger industrial firms the fee rise is smaller, at about 9 per cent.

Fees for industrial and financial companies with turnover in excess of £1 billion rose to £24,000 and £25,000 respectively, according to the Monks survey of more than 200 companies. However, the sur-

vey shows, too, that some 10 per cent of the companies examined made no increase in non-executive director fees between 1996 and 1997.

A Government-backed inquiry into boardroom pay, headed by Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of Marks & Spencer, recommended that executive directors no longer sat on board remuneration committees, but

the Monks study shows that in 18 per cent of firms, they still do — although that number is down from a quarter.

In 46 per cent of industrial and 54 per cent of financial companies, remuneration committees are now setting pay at below board level, most commonly to posts such as those reporting directly to chief executives and heads of subsidiary firms.

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In the second place, because the Apricot FT1200 offers the kind of performance and security features normally found in high-level servers for the price of some desktops.

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In fact, spec for spec the FT1200 trounces the "equivalent" models from Compaq, Dell, HP or IBM. Which, when you think about it, doesn't make them very "equivalent".

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□ Next move Ladbroke's in casinos bid □ Barclays buyback fails to find favour □ Will Lang go for Lloyd's chairmanship?

Wheel of good fortune

WHILE it may be a long while before any of them win a Queen's Award for Export Achievement, the casinos of London are well versed at helping the country's balance of payments by separating the world's super-rich from their money.

Very soon one of the big players in upmarket casinos, London Clubs International, will publish its offer document for another, Capital Corporation. The assumption on the stock market, and one that is keeping Capital's shares ahead of the value of London's offer, is that this will spark a bidding war, with another high-roller, Ladbroke, coming in with its own offer.

But Ladbroke may be playing for rather higher stakes, according to some intriguing speculation circulating in the City. There are seven clubs at the top end of the market, the kind frequented by high-rollers such as Kerry Packer or the Sultan of Brunei. Between them, London and Capital own four.

In any other industry this would have the Office of Fair Trading screaming monopoly before the wheel had stopped spinning. But there are several reasons why a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission looks out of the question. An MMC inquiry in 1983 found no problems with a potential

merger bringing 11 out of 19 of all London clubs, including the more downmarket ones, under one roof; should London buy Capital this would consolidate nine out of a total of 21.

This is a genuine global market — London is competing for Mr Packer's or the Sultan's money with Atlantic City, Cannes, Las Vegas or anywhere else a private jet can reach. These are all private members clubs, providing a distinctly unessential service; and whatever your monopoly you cannot affect the odds on the wheel or the table.

Take this argument to its logical conclusion, and there is no reason why Ladbroke should not acquire both London and Capital together. This might not play well with some of the high-rollers, but the global casinos market is consolidating rapidly. An example is the \$6.5 billion hostile bid from Ladbroke's US partner Hilton Hotels for ITT, driven in part by Hilton's desire to acquire the latter's Caesar's World casinos.

Hilton is keen on gaming, Ladbroke on hotels — it will take control of 22 more of these if the

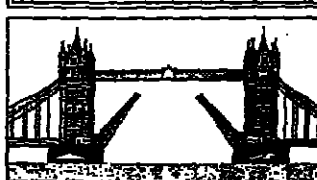
ITT purchase by Hilton goes through. Any Ladbroke play for London casinos could involve help from Hilton, so cementing the alliance further.

One further tangle. ITT held merger talks with Ladbroke a year ago, and some Wall Street analysts think a hostile bid for the British group could provide a "poison pill" defence. Hilton will be allowed to buy as much as 20 per cent in March, after the British group's figures for 1996 are released. Either outcomes would be good for Ladbroke's share price. *Faites vos jeux, mesdames et messieurs, faites vos jeux.*

A taxing question

WHEN the Chancellor moved to close the tax loophole that rewarded tax-exempt shareholders disproportionately from share buybacks and special dividends, he cannot have expected to kill such schemes stone dead. But the response of traders to the Barclays buyback yesterday suggests companies with surplus

PENNINGTON



cash may have to think again about handing it back to their shareholders.

It also confirms those suspicions many of us had voiced that the buyback and special dividend windfalls seen over the past couple of years — more than £7 billion last year alone — have been largely tax-driven, rather than aimed at handing back surplus funds to the people who actually own the shares.

The argument went thus. Rather than spending money on unproven acquisitions and other corporate foolishness, moves that so often go wrong and destroy shareholder value, companies would slim themselves down to operate with only as much spare cash as they needed.

The argument was given added impetus by low interest rates, which meant money could be borrowed at, say 6 to 8 per cent while the cost of equity was running at 12 to 14 per cent. Gear up, and allow shareholders to invest the money spun off where they wanted, and everyone benefited. Cash-rich utilities had an extra motive, because otherwise a Labour government might do the slimming for them, by means of a utility tax.

The problem was tax. Broadly, as tax-exempt funds, most City institutions had done better than taxpayers because they could claim tax credits unavailable to the latter. They could still maintain their holdings in the companies by buying the shares back in the market the next day. This looked like a hidden subsidy from the Exchequer, which is why the Inland Revenue had wanted the loophole closed; it also cut against the basic principle that all shareholders should be treated equally.

We cannot say until the next buyback founders, if it does, whether such schemes have reached the end of the road, or

whether, as Barclays claims, this is the market's vote of confidence on the excellence of its equity. Until then the jury is still out.

Attractions of an autumn election

THE general election is exciting rather less attention over at the crumbling towers of Lloyd's of London than a rather smaller vote later in the year. Some form of external regulation seems inevitable whoever wins in May. But the result of the election could have an impact on who puts themselves forward for the chairmanship of Lloyd's.

The £450,000 salary could persuade one or two MPs tired out of safe seats to risk rejection for the second time in the space of six months. There is no natural insider with the clout to stand up to the names and to the growing battalions of corporate investors.

Spencer Stuart, the headhunter, has been recruited to thin out a very long list from the great and good outside Lloyd's. The preferred man, and there are

not many women contenders, will stand for election in the autumn, once the shortlist has been presented to Lloyd's a few weeks after the election. The ideal candidate will be late 50s, early 60s, respected in the City, a working name, with an understanding of the market and used to a rough ride from the voters. In this case the 1,626 working names.

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade and former Lloyd's underwriter, could easily become a working name again to qualify. He will be celebrating his 57th birthday at about the time the preferred candidate is selected. He also handily side-stepped the difficult decisions relating to Lloyd's, so avoiding making too many enemies. It could become the best-paid chicken run of them all.

On his metal

CORPORATE Japan has obviously gone soft. In the *Yakuza*, or *mafia*, he would have lost a fingertip. Under the *bushido*, surgery would have been even more radical. The head of Sumitomo has merely taken the blame for the copper scandal by resigning. But before we assume too much Occidental superiority, reflect that if this had been a Western company, he might have hung on for his pension.



Malcolm Williamson, chief executive of Standard Chartered, left, with Patrick Gillam and Peter Wood, finance director

Standard Chartered targets bad debt clients

BY ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

STANDARD CHARTERED, the international banking group that unveiled a 32 per cent rise in annual pre-tax profits to £870 million yesterday, has undertaken a major drive to address potential bad debt problems.

Patrick Gillam, the chairman, said 550 corporate client accounts had been closed last year at a cost of millions of pounds. He said that assessing poor credit risks now and acting on them immediately would enable the client to find another bank "while it was still a bankable proposition" and it would save Standard Chartered from storing up bad debt problems in the future.

Those clients who had been

fired, or persuaded to leave the bank after a "repricing" of their charges, accounted for between 5 and 10 per cent of the bank's corporate portfolio.

Mr Gillam said that Standard Chartered, which reported a 23 per cent rise in earnings per share to 55.5p, had almost completed its reorganisation. Costs had been brought under control and had risen by only 2 per cent to £1.1 billion last year and the business strategy was now focused on four sectors: personal and consumer, corporate, institutional and treasury. The bank lifted its final dividend to 10.25p, which is payable on May 30, from 7.75p, to give a 32 per cent rise in the annual payout to 14.5p.

In geographical terms, Standard said that its main markets were now clearly identified as Asia, with Hong Kong, India and China to the fore, the Middle East and Africa, with the UK and United States also playing a key role.

Hong Kong proved to be the group's largest profit centre chipping in £298 million, compared with £241 million, while personal banking services provided a profit rise of 27 per cent to £288 million. The other Asian countries in Standard Chartered's portfolio contributed an 11 per cent increase to £241 million. The real profit centre of the future, however, would be to supply retail banking services

to mainland China, Mr Gillam said.

Standard Chartered, which saw bad debt provisions fall to £64 million from £72 million, said that trading profits from its corporate department had risen 27 per cent to £266 million, while Treasury was up a £1 million to £137 million.

Mr Gillam said: "In three years, the group has more than doubled trading profit from £358 million to £818 million by continuing to provide a high-quality service to corporate, institutional and personal clients in the fast-growing Asian and expanding Middle Eastern and African markets."

Tempus, page 28

Challenge to Siebe Whessoe takeover

BY PAUL DURMAN

SIEBE'S agreed takeover of Whessoe, the instrumentation company, received an unexpected challenge yesterday when its £46 million bid was topped by a joint offer from a Norwegian and a Swiss company.

Navia, the new name for Seatex Gaxex, the Norwegian marine instrumentation group, and Endress & Hauser of Switzerland are making a cash offer of 175p a share that values Whessoe at £52.6 million. The new offer is 12.9 per cent more than Siebe is offering, and nearly 95 per cent

more than Whessoe's pre-bid share price. Navia will bear two-thirds of the costs.

Navia and Endress & Hauser believe they can afford to pay more because Whessoe's businesses form a good fit with their own. The new bidders jointly acquired a 10.6 per cent stake in Whessoe in the market.

Whessoe said its board would consider the new offer. Navia and Endress & Hauser began bid talks three weeks ago, but Siebe's 155p a share bid two weeks ago topped their initial offer.

CSC buoyant as profits rise 21%

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

BRAEHEAD, Capital Shopping Centres' huge £250 million development near Glasgow, due to open in spring 1999, is already two-thirds pre-let and space should be entirely booked up by the end of this year, the company said yesterday.

CSC, which also owns the Lakeside shopping centre at Thurrock in Essex and the MetroCentre on Tyneside, unveiled a 21 per cent jump in pre-tax profit to £58.4 million for the financial year ended December 31. Record rental levels were established at all

CSC's shopping centres last year and like-for-like sales growth was 9 per cent. Total sales at the centres rose from £1.6 billion to £1.8 billion.

The Lakeside Visa card, launched last year with Midland Bank, has been judged a success and is to be replicated at other CSC-owned centres. The company remains interested in new projects and acquisitions. Earnings per share were 11.8p (10.7p) and the final proposed dividend of 4.5p gives a full year 8.25p, up 10 per cent on last year. It is payable on May 6.

Courtaulds cuts 90 jobs

BY OLIVER AUGUST

COURTAULDS, the chemicals group, will scale down its viscose production and cut 90 jobs in response to a worldwide fall in demand and the resulting squeeze in margins. Of the 800 workers in viscose at Grimsby, Humberside, at least 50 will be transferred to other tasks, while around 40 voluntary redundancies will be sought. Courtaulds is cutting 25,000 tonnes, or 20 per cent, from its annual European viscose production.

Gordon Campbell, chief ex-

ecutive, said: "Viscose is slowly recovering from its low point last summer, but capacity still exceeds demand, and trading remains unsatisfactory. There is no prospect within an acceptable time frame for material improvement to this situation."

The company said it had improved trading in each of its businesses, excluding viscose, despite the sluggishness of continental European economies. "However," said Mr Campbell, "a combination of the strength of sterling... and

the sale last year of four non-core businesses, limits the extent to which this improvement is reflected in profits."

The majority of those made redundant will be redeployed to Tencel production. Tencel has been hailed as a new "wonder fabric". It was developed by Courtaulds at a cost of £300 million over 20 years. Tencel accounts for only 4 per cent of group turnover but production has been oversubscribed since 1992.

Tempus, page 28

Kettle costs take Pifco off the boil

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE COST of developing and launching Pifco's range of flat element kettles resulted in lower underlying profits at the halfway stage.

The electrical appliance manufacturer reported trading profit down 11 per cent to £1.39 million in the six months to October 31. Pre-tax profit, boosted by an exceptional item worth £576,000 from the sale of a building, rose 16 per cent to £1.82 million.

Sales of the new Millennium kettles have grown "brilliantly", according to Michael Webber, chairman. That would be more evident in the second half. Commercial sensitivity kept him from providing sales figures.

The company said that it still has not received financial information requested from Kenwood, the larger rival for which it has said it might bid. The companies are technically still in an offer period. The Takeover Panel said that it was up to Pifco to decide whether it wants to bid.

Earnings were 9.9p (8.8p) a share. The interim payout is 2.5p (2.3p), payable on May 1.

Tempus, page 28

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Operating earnings per ordinary share	43.5p	47.6p
Dividend per ordinary share	30.30p	28.25p
Shareholders' funds	£3,902m	£4,074m

Note: (1) Includes realised investment gains before tax of £164m (1995 £130m).

Copies of the full Group accounts, together with a summary Annual Review, which have not yet been reported on by the auditors, will be circulated to shareholders on 20 March 1997 and delivered to the Registrar of Companies after approval at the Annual General Meeting which will be held on 15 April 1997. Members of the public may obtain copies of the accounts after 20 March by telephoning the Shareholders Relations Service on 0171 662 8866.

Commercial Union plc, St. Helen's, 1 Undershaft, London, EC3P 3DQ
Tel: 0171 283 7500 Internet: <http://www.commercial-union.co.uk/cu>

مكتبة من رصاص

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Sir Rocco breezes back

SIR ROCCO FORTE is forking out for another hotel. On Friday, he will take both ownership and management control of the Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh.

Hoteller Peter Tyrie spent £30 million refurbishing the luxury pile, affectionately known as the "NB", which was formerly owned by British Rail. Five years ago, the Balmoral fell into receivership; the Bank of Scotland took hold of the asset, and Forte, taken over by Granada last year, was awarded the management contract.

Part of the Meridian network until this week, the 190-room hotel, built above Waverley station, boasts a beautiful view of the castle.

Welcome advice

THE country's most powerful money managers, who gathered in Eastbourne yesterday for the start of the NAF's investment conference, were upstaged by a client, no less. Steve Bundred, chief executive of the London borough of Camden, weighed in on the subject of "Beauty Parades". Laying down the "Ten Commandments" for presentations by fund managers, Bundred spoke from on high: "Thou shalt not bore the panel with sporting metaphors or tell unfunny jokes." Most importantly, he warned managers: "Don't outstay your welcome."



"Heads we blame the strength of sterling — tails we blame the National Lottery"

Silent knight

IT WAS a busy day for Sir Peter Davis, Prudential's group chief executive, when he recorded the voice-over for his latest TV advertisement. After two days filming, the "Man from the Pru" was scheduled to make the recording on the same afternoon that he was preparing for the Scottish Amicable bid. "I had to call the product company and tell them, 'I can't do the recording this afternoon, but I can't tell you why,'" he laughs. They had to reschedule.

GREEN FLAG sent out an antidote powder — "for the morning after" — to those guests brave enough to turn up to the breakdown group's party on Monday night, held at London's Bombay Brasserie.

Nicola who?

SUE HERERA, American business broadcaster and author of *Women of the Street* — an insight into the women in the US who shape the markets — has neither heard of the vice chairman of Mercury Asset Management, nor megabuck mother Nicola Horlick. Bridget Macaskill, president and CEO of Oppenheimer Funds, is the only "transplant from Britain" to appear in Herera's book.

WAS Norman Lamont searching for a soulmate? The Conservative MP and former Chancellor stormed into the Savoy Bar at The Savoy yesterday, scanned the brightly coloured snuff from under his bushy brows, then marched abruptly back out again.

MORAG PRESTON

Journalists can exert great influence for good and help to raise the value of business by between 10 and 50 per cent, says a new book. There is bound to be a catch. We are not to be missionaries for higher powers, such as Gordon Brown's spin-doctors, but for denizens of the Ashridge Strategic Management Centre.

Management consultants have long suffered from the missionary syndrome. They have seen the future and it works, if you do it their way. Older hands tend to claim that the past worked perfectly well until it was spoilt. We can usually agree that things are pretty unsatisfactory at present — unless you happen to be a government, council or board urgently seeking re-election.

David Sadler, Andrew Campbell and Richard Koch, authors of *Break Up* (published by Capstone, £18.99), espouse a simple big idea. They want most of the world's large corporations to demerge. "The break-up epidemic heralds a new era of capitalism" and will create an extra \$1,000,000 billion of value. Possibly. "Gone will be management's attachment to size." They must be joking.

Most multibusiness corporations are worth more dead than alive, they argue. Performance is dragged down and value destroyed by the dead hand of the corporate centre. Frictions between businesses that trade with each other and the lack of direct contact between managers and investors, the farmers of the corporate world, is as old as the sinister arts of overhead allocation.

Crumbly by second-tier managers, the sinners of the corporate world, is as old as the sinister arts of overhead allocation.

Take this corporate panacea, there are plenty more if it fails



GRAHAM FARRELMAN

Pique has been heightened of late by envy. Thousands of managers of smaller subsidiaries have won independence and lottery-sized leveraged share options via management buyouts, the last magic potion.

What *Break Up* ambiguously calls "an epidemic" has already infected many boards. The investment bankers, accountants, lawyers, PR advisers and speculators who make up the financial engineering industry have cloned the germ of an idea to develop a major new product line.

In America, break-ups topped \$100 billion in 1996. In Britain, Hanson and British Gas have just emulated ICI and Thorn-EMI. BG's Richard Giordano urged sceptics to see how much better executives would perform if they focused on their own business. ICI's finance director, pledging a new demerger of Tioxide, says his board is looking at "every creative opportunity" to reshape itself. Conglomerates are deeply unfashionable, as complaints by Tomkins's Greg Huthings attest. And most big groups are made up of disparate businesses, even if they claim a common thread.

In America, companies spun off from their parents usually outperform stock

market averages in their first 18 months, seeming proof that value is being freed. But outperformance is concentrated in small companies (under \$200 million) and surely owes much to potential as takeover targets for new predators. Heightening monopoly via merger is always a great value creator. For small shareholders, left with random tiny packets of stock, any benefit may well be swamped by charges. Bigger spin-offs gain a more modest average 10 per cent, more of which may be accounted for by the extra interest stirred rather than anything

real. Unless the parent was flabbily, demerger initially raises corporate overheads, as among Hanson's children.

Demergers, like buyouts, certainly can unleash energies and venturing spirit once buried in the corporate pyramid. Commitment to a single business can focus those energies to advantage. Whatever boards or consultants say, however, demerger is just one useful tool in the financial kitbox, not a wonder drug for management.

The Times urged ICI to hivel off its pharmaceutical interests long before Lord Hanson focused board attention on "shareholder value". Drug companies were rated more highly than chemicals. Growth was faster and relatively immune from economic cycles. Within ICI, Zeneca was rated more in line with the group's weak links than its stars, as is often the case. This was not a skirmish in a management revolution. Zeneca just outgrew the parent that nurtured it, as Vodafone outgrew Racal. Neither of these FT-SE 100 companies would have existed had their parents forsaken diversity.

Big groups usually demerge big divisions, instead of selling them, to avoid potentially vast tax bills on accumulated gains. But the

tests for sales or spin-offs are different. A demerger should be contemplated only if companies spun off can expect a better rating as stand-alone financial entities. The thought of splitting Hanson never excited. It was a model conglomerate in that it generally kept only lowly rated businesses, giving them extra corporate value through its skills at tax-saving, at takeovers and at selling the titbits of its meals at high prices.

Hanson was worth more than the sum of its parts. The old Hanson died, leaving shareholders nursing a loss on the bits left over, because it came to the end of its natural life cycle. Though other factors were at play, this life cycle chiefly coincided with the business lives of its creators — two in Hanson's case, one at Lorrho, four or five at BTR. Investors entrust money to such people to increase it as best they can, just as they employ great multinationals as investment agents in their own area of expertise.

Individuals' skills, ambitions, momentum and decline are bigger forces in business and stock performance than any management theory. For every well-oiled management sausage machine at Unilever or Mitsubishi, dozens of companies' fortunes rise and fall with individuals. Western business might work better if the occasional Akio Morita or Honda-san merely added the spice to a more stable corporate pudding. The City would hate it. Movement means money, via takeovers and mergers, deals, MBOs or demergers. One breeds the other when it goes wrong and each sounds terribly convincing at the time.

Janet Bush finds Gordon Brown doggedly determined in the election run-up

Heir apparent ready to cast long shadow

Gordon Brown this week became an official veteran of the "Long March" to Economic Respectability. His speech on inflation last night was the last piece of a painstakingly compiled jigsaw meant to prove that Labour has buried the feckless ghosts of past economic policy. No longer will inflation be sacrificed on the altar of untrammelled growth, no more will Labour be the party forced by vested interests into spending what it cannot afford and raising taxes to pay for it, no longer will Labour allow itself to stand accused of economic profligacy.

It has been a dogged and disciplined effort. In an interview with *The Times* in an ancient, semi-circular office off the old hall of the Palace of Westminster, Mr Brown grimly settled in for another inquisition intent on finding out whether the demons of Old Labour have been banished from the body of his party. Labour's record on macro-economic management has been — and will continue to be — until polling day — the central target of Conservative attacks. Just hours before *The Times* interview on Tuesday, Kenneth Clarke claimed that Mr Brown faced a £12 billion hole in his spending plans, a £5.3 billion shortfall in the first year of a Labour government and a further £7 billion in the year after that. The Chancellor said that Labour's pledge to stick with Conservative spending plans for the first two years in government would founder because it had failed to factor in future privatisations, social security reforms and an influx of private finance into the health service. There were also, Mr Clarke alleged, serious accounting errors.

In the statistical armed combat that so dominates the pre-election debate, Mr Brown moved swiftly to the counter-attack, accusing the Government not only of bandying about unjustifiable figures in an effort to discredit Labour but also of making irresponsible and uncashed spending promises of its own.

Kenneth Clarke's attack has fallen apart. First of all it used to be £30 billion, now it is £12 billion, and he has provided no rational explanation for either figure. Secondly, when they get down to the nub of the matter, he cannot tell us how he is going to reach his figure. What people know is that we are applying very tough decisions, that it is the Conservatives at the moment who are making all sorts of public spending commitments, from the Royal Yacht at £60 million to an army cadet force at £1 billion, to a new share-saving scheme which costs £40 million, to a new proposal on business rates. Every time a Government spokesman stands up these

days, they are making new commitments and we are not going to go down that road."

After the disaster of 1992 when Labour, unlike the Conservative Party, came clean on its tax plans but lost, Mr Brown and his team are determined, above all else, not to give hostages to fortune over tax. Again and again during the interview, the Shadow Chancellor retreated into the comfort of his personal mantra. "It is because of our concern about the public finances that we have said that there are no public spending commitments on Labour's part that will lead to increases in taxes. We have said that we have no spending plans which require additional taxes. I repeat, we have no public spending commitments of our own that would require higher taxes."

Just as Mr Clarke did in his interview in *The Times* last week, the Shadow Chancellor refused to be moved into commenting on individual taxes beyond personal income tax rates and VAT, on which Labour has already made public promises. It is clear that, if a fiscal tightening were needed, there are plenty of targets but, like the Conservative Party, Labour is not prepared to discuss these.

"I have said that it is not credible to ask a responsible finance spokesman to make commitments in Opposition on every allowance, relief or exemption without the information... about the state of the economy and the public finances, when the Chancellor, with all the information available to him, refuses to make these commitments. I think that is the responsible position and that is the position that I will uphold during the election campaign."

The constant political tit-for-tat over tax and spending is astonishingly draining and Mr Brown appears tired and



Gordon Brown demonstrating yesterday how he would open up and improve the advice on policy available to the Treasury and Bank of England

providing new opportunities for the low-paid and the unemployed, and encouraging an atmosphere of lifetime learning to equip everyone to cope with the new and challenging world of work.

In talking about the need not just for macroeconomic stability but a new institutional framework for policy-making, Mr Brown is keen to dispel the image of Labour as lightweight, painted by Mr Clarke last week. The groundwork, he says, has been painstaking. "I don't think there is any Treasury team that has, in Opposition, gained more experience and been more pre-

pared to look at what is happening around the world. I have visited America many times, talked to the Federal Reserve, the Treasury department, people in the White House. I have been in Japan, I have been in other important economies, looking at what is going on. What we are announcing is not some opportunistic statement before an election. It is based on considerable research, discussion, dialogue and learning from what has worked and what hasn't worked in different parts of the world."

Far from accepting Mr Clarke's description of him last week as a pale shadow of himself — although he says he is flattered that the Chancellor spends so much time discussing him — Mr Brown argues with a passion that it is Mr Clarke and his colleagues who have lacked boldness. "The real failure of the Conservatives is that we have not, in the last few years, had the reforming Budgets that we need. We have made almost no impact on the modernisation of the welfare state. Simply to cut benefits here and there without an underlying philosophy is a terrible indictment of the lack of imagination about the future, a failure to understand what's going on in the labour market and how we have got to make the changes which are necessary to equip ourselves for the future."

Mr Brown takes on some of the messianic tone of Tony Blair when he talks about his programme to transform the supply side of the economy. "I want to modernise the welfare state. I want to rebuild it around the work ethic. I want to start by getting people who shouldn't be unemployed back to work. I want them to go on and reform the tax and benefit system where we can to help people get the work incentives and the rewards for work that I feel particularly low-paid workers need in this country. I want to make the learning effort as well as the work ethic the central part of a new welfare state for the future."

He went on: "Now that's where a reforming Chancellor should be. It's where Lloyd George was in 1909 and 1910

when he created the modern welfare state. It is where Labour was in 1945 when we actually understood what was happening in the employment market and made the changes necessary to create a new era of employment opportunity for all. And it is where we have got to be again."

Whatever the opinion polls say, Mr Brown gives no impression of thinking the election already won, dropping into the interview at one point an "if we are lucky enough to win". His public face is somewhat dour, painstaking, methodical. The road to the 1997 election has been

long and intensely pressurised. The burden of not making any fatal electoral mistakes weighs heavy. But, as the interview comes to a close, Mr Brown allows the mask to drop. "If we win, I can promise you it will be exciting," he says, almost twinkling.

6 I want to make the learning effort as well as the work ethic the central part of a new welfare state for the future

just a little frustrated as he repeats his party's position for the umpteenth time. But budgeting home the Conservatives is committed to macroeconomic stability is the necessary downpayment for any discussion of the rest of the programme. Mr Brown calls it "stability for a purpose". His serious demeanour is replaced by genuine excitement when he talks about Labour's plans to open up, broaden and, in his view, improve the advice on policy available to the Treasury and the Bank of England. There is a real fervour when Mr Brown talks about the challenge of reforming the welfare state, of

used by a passenger arriving in England through the tunnel) contains only an 0800 number that cannot be used from abroad. Apart from causing inconvenience to existing customers, companies could be losing potential overseas business by using these 0800 and 0345 numbers. I would suggest that, in addition to free and local-rate numbers, all companies give a telephone number that can be rung from overseas. Yours faithfully, SUSAN WATKIN, 35 Cambridge Avenue, Lincoln.

Forex futures best for exporters

From P. W. R. Robeson
Sir, Dr Arriens' letter, January 30) is right in one respect — there could be nothing worse than a wrong rate of entry into a single currency. But the option of a fixed-but-adjustable wide-band ERM is not preferable to today's floating pound given the disruption and argument inevitably involved if one wants to adjust at any time (even if one got it right initially).

The wide swings in sterling's spot rates can be very largely offset by exporters selling forward the foreign currency pro-

ceeds of their products anticipated at the time of determining their manufactured cost. I find it hard to believe that since I retired from contact with the London foreign exchange market (over 15 years ago) that it has become less efficient than it then was. Yours faithfully, P. W. R. ROBESON, Thatchers, Happisburgh, Norwich.

Letters to the Business section of *The Times* can be sent by fax on 0171-762 5112.

Not so friendly for callers from afar

From Miss Susan Watkin
Sir, Many companies in these customer-friendly times now only issue 0800 and 0345 (free and local rate) telephone numbers to the public. I understand from a friend living in Brussels that none of these numbers are accessible from abroad. My friend has been having great difficulty contacting various utilities by telephone regarding a property she owns in this country. I also understand that a leaflet issued by Eurostar giving details of Eurostar trains leaving London (which can only be

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مکتبہ من راجل

CU profits dented by bad weather payments

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

SEVERE winter weather and the recent storms have cost Commercial Union "many millions" of pounds in underwriting losses and, as a result, household insurance premiums are likely to rise this year. Unveiling a drop of 665 million in full-year pre-tax operating profit to £444 million, CU said that life profits and new business had increased strongly but the general insurance results had been affected by competition and weather claims. Currency movements also knocked 664 million off pre-tax operating profit.

CU declined to comment on talk that it had been in talks with BAT Industries over combining operations, but it believed the UK insurance market was likely to consolidate. John Carter, chief executive, said that Scottish Amicable, the mutual life insurer which is up for sale, was looking expensive and that the insurer was "cautious" about making an acquisition "at the top of a bull market". He added that CU was more likely to consider an overseas acquisition.

Shares in CU fell 23.4p to 666.4p yesterday, in spite of a 7 per cent increase in the full-year dividend to 30.3p. Operating earnings per share were 43.5p, against 52.8p in 1995, and shareholders' funds were £3.9 billion (1995: £4.1 billion).

CU is restructuring its general insurance operation and has set aside £9 million for staff redundancy costs and an injection into the pension fund to allow staff to take early retirement.

General insurance profits dropped from £474 million to £365 million, because of £41 million in weather claims in the United States and competition in the UK, particularly in motor insurance. However, market conditions improved in France, The Netherlands and Canada. Worldwide, new life and savings business grew by 25 per cent, to £2.9 billion. New annual premiums were up 22 per cent, to £253 million, and new single premiums by 20 per cent, to £2.4 billion, boosted by 47 per cent growth in The Netherlands.

Life insurance is the fastest-growing business worldwide and premium income has increased in global terms from 42 per cent to 57 per cent of business, CU said. The company said that it expected growth to continue in the second half. Its shares, which lost 10 per cent of their value after breaking through the £10 barrier last month, lost 5p to close at 947.5p. Exposure to the fast-growing telecoms sector helped pre-tax profits to grow to £10.6 million (£9 million) in the second half of 1996, on sales of £148 million (£129 million). Its telecoms division, which organises phone bills for overseas mobile phone companies, grew 51 per cent, contributing sales of £23 million — 16 per cent of the group total. Overall earnings were 11.7p a share (9.8p), and an interim dividend of 3.6p (3p) is due on April 15.

Times, page 28



John Carter, CU chief executive is cautious about an acquisition "at the top of a bull market"

Cordiant falls to fifth place

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

SAATCHI and Saatchi, the advertising arm of Cordiant, has been toppled from the number one position in the advertising industry's annual league tables.

The agency fell to fifth place in the "Top 300" chart published today by Campaign, the trade magazine. Its billings fell from £260.20 million in 1995 to £224.34 million in 1996 — a decline of 13.78 per cent.

Stefano Hatfield, editor of Campaign, said that the decline was partly because of the continued fall-out that followed the dramatic exit from the company of its founder, Maurice Saatchi, two years ago. "They have failed to replace the business that followed Maurice out of the door," he said.

In stark contrast, M&C Saatchi's new company, M&C Saatchi, jumped from number 20 to number eight. The company's billings rose 165.92 per cent to £174.95 million.

Since M&C Saatchi started it has steadily built up its client base. New clients include ITV, Pedigree petfoods, PPP and Fosters Lager. Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO moved up from fourth place in 1995 to take the top spot for 1996 for the first time, thanks largely to winning British Telecom's £90 million advertising account.

The chart indicates that, overall, the industry is undergoing a boom.

Sumitomo chairman resigns 'to atone'

Sumitomo chairman resigns 'to atone'

FROM ROBERT WHYMAN IN TOKYO

SUMITOMO Corporation yesterday said Tomichi Akiyama, the chairman, was resigning to atone for the huge copper trading losses incurred through the unauthorised deals of Yasuo Hamanaka. The resignation "reflects the company's repentance", Sumitomo said, reiterating its claim that Mr Hamanaka was acting on his own in conducting improper trades.

Mr Akiyama said: "As the person who was serving as the president at that time, it is for me to take responsibility by resigning as chairman of the company." The resignation of a top executive when a company is tainted by scandal is common in Japan, a ritual act of cleansing and appeasement rather than an admission of complicity. All the blame for years of dubious copper trading that cost Sumitomo \$2.6 billion has been laid at Mr Hamanaka's door.

Last week the former star copper trader pleaded guilty to fraud and forgery at Tokyo District Court. He is on £250,000 bail until March 10.

Claiming none of the corporate management was involved in the case, Mr Akiyama revealed that two other Sumitomo executives had tendered their resignations.

Sumitomo is anxious to avoid being identified with the activities of the once hugely influential trader known as "Mr Copper". It fears a wave of lawsuits from traders, brokers and shareholders claiming to have suffered losses. But Mr Hamanaka's lawyers have said that they intend to produce evidence of the trading firm's involvement in the scandal.

Pennington, page 27

Funds shortage cuts Crestacare numbers

CRESTACARE, the operator of private nursing homes, said occupancy levels fell to 85 per cent last year from 90 per cent in 1995 and warned shareholders that the pressures would remain for the foreseeable future. Sir Matthew Goodwin, chairman, blamed funding shortages within local authorities. CrestaCare, which operates 3,374 beds and 133 day centres, reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £5.3 million from £2.9 million in 1995. Earnings were 2p a share (0.9p). The shares were unchanged at 28.4p. Turnover rose to £46.5 million from £42.99 million. The company said substantial cost savings had been achieved after a reorganisation last year.

Card Clear tops £1m

CARD CLEAR, the credit card protection company that merged with rival CardCast in December, earned pre-tax profits of £1.08 million (£110,000) last year on sales that were 30 per cent higher at £5.75 million. Earnings were 1.23p a share (0.14p). There is no dividend. Brian Raven, chief executive, said: "We are the only company who do exactly what we do. There are others which deal in cheque guarantee cards, but as for national coverage, we're now the only game in town."

Angola loss for Ranger

RANGER OIL, the North American company with significant North Sea interests, incurred a net loss of \$55.8 million in 1996, compared with earnings of \$19.9 million in 1995. Fred Dymally, president and chief executive officer, said the loss included a \$71 million writedown of assets in Angola, where exploration has been disappointing. North Sea oil production increased 62 per cent to an average of 24,067 barrels per day. New fields coming on stream included Harding, Pierce, Columbia B and Banff.

Adwest in the black

ADWEST GROUP, the automotive and electronics components company that underwent a significant restructuring last year, yesterday reported pre-tax profits of £6.3 million for the six months to December 31. This compared with a loss of £1.58 million in the first half of the previous year, when there was a £5.4 million charge against disposals. Earnings were 5p a share, against losses of 3.3p. The interim dividend is held at 2.3p a share. The company said a satisfactory outcome for the current year was expected.

Zotefoams earnings dip

ZOTEFOAMS, the manufacturer of polyethylene block foam, suffered a fall in pre-tax profits to £6.9 million in 1996 from £7.5 million in 1995. The company blamed significant destocking in North America and unfavourable currency movements towards the year end. Earnings were 12.6p a share, down from 13.6p. The total dividend is increased to 6p a share from 5.4p, with a 4p final. The company said that the market in mainland Europe improved in the second half after a strong start.

Changes help Ryland

RYLAND, the acquisitive Birmingham motor dealer, said trading in January exceeded expectations. Peter Whale, chairman, said strategic changes in the industry "are demonstrably working in our favour". Pre-tax profits rose 83 per cent to £1.56 million for the eight months to December 31. Pro forma calendar-year profits rose to £4 million from £2.5 million before tax and exceptional items and pro forma earnings were 10.22p a share (2.68p). There is a single final dividend of 2.68p a share for the eight-month period.

Vardon raises capital spending

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

VARDON, the leisure company, aims to add five new health clubs to its Metropolitan chain this year as it raises total capital expenditure by a third, to £20 million.

The company yesterday unveiled a 30 per cent rise in full-year profits, to £11.8 million. Overall turnover increased by 47 per cent, to £77 million.

The health and fitness division exceeded expectations, producing a second-half operating contribution of £2.2 million. Vardon said that it would increase investment to £10 million this year to help to expand the Metropolitan chain, bought for £40 million last year.

The company's bingo division bucked the market trend by doubling profits, to £3.25 million. Vardon said that the decline in admissions and sales had been arrested, and spending per head had risen. Vardon aims to open three new bingo sites this year.

The attractions division suffered a 10 per cent fall in profits, to £6.5 million.

Vardon blamed poor attendances at its coastal Sea Life centres and reorganisation costs of £300,000. The company said that it has managed to arrest the decline in attendances in recent months through spending more on marketing — including its first national television campaign — and seeking to attract organised tours.

A final dividend of 1.45p, due on May 2, lifts the total payout to 1.9p, up 15 per cent. Vardon shares rose by 2.4p, to 112p.

ACCOUNTANCY

Make firms' reports deliver

It is time to check that reporting by listed companies gives the details we need, says Anthony Carey

Companies come in all shapes and sizes and their annual reports show the diversity. Only a few, however, display leadership in this vital area of corporate communications. Out in front in 1997 are Kingfisher, the retail group and Hodder Headline, the publisher, recently announced winners of the Stock Exchange and Chartered Accountants' Annual Awards for Published Accounts.

Kingfisher's annual report opens with a well-focused mission statement, which, at least potentially, lets performance be measured against stated aims. The group commits itself to "delivering consistent and superior returns to shareholders by being one of Europe's most profitable volume retailers". Its strategy is to do this "by developing a portfolio of strong retail brands with leading positions in attractive mass markets, well motivated staff and good supplier relationships". A concise introduction to the main businesses follows, along with financial highlights and some fairly presented geographical information. There is welcome frankness about difficulties in turning round B & Q, and the operational review also offers

rarely found information on Kingfisher's ranking in its main markets.

Hodder Headline's goal of "maximising the potential of long-term copyrights for books and related materials" through "market conscious publishing, vigorous promotion and personal service" similarly gives a valuable insight into management's aims, though it would be harder to quantify the extent to which such objectives were being met. However, just as Kingfisher's goal to be market leader is supported by information on market shares, so Hodder Headline offers data on backlist sales.

Both annual reports discuss plans and, to a lesser degree, prospects for the year ahead, but, unfortunately, neither has much assessment of risks and uncertainties facing the business over the next few years and how they are being managed, a weakness of our present financial reporting model.

Much of each report is devoted, as for all listed companies now, to corporate governance information. Both provide pictures and short biographies of each director and enough facts to give a reasonable impression of the composition of the boards with ref-



Anthony Carey wants more facts on how firms manage staff

erence to the proportion of members who are non-executive, the directors' business experience, their age and other appointments held by the non-executive directors. The new remuneration committee report runs to six pages for Kingfisher, with Hodder Headline's a couple of pages

less. Much detail is given in both about general factors considered in fixing the pay and bonus of each executive director, though this will not enable a reader to decide whether the rewards in any particular case are reasonable in the light of individual performance. There are simply too

many variables in the equation for this to be possible.

Kingfisher outlines its progressive equal opportunities policy and Hodder refers to the recruitment of finance and information technology staff. However, even these "people" organisations at the leading edge of reporting do not really explain how they motivate, develop and utilise staff. Yet their people are almost certainly the main source of their competitive advantage. We need more depth in innovative reporting on human resources.

Financial statements are heavily influenced by company law and accounting standards, but segmented reporting can often be used as a test for the degree of transparency. Here, Hodder scores quite well, for example, in analysis of turnover by destination.

The past decade has seen piecemeal changes in financial reporting, with the introduction of summary financial statements, the Cadbury and Greenbury codes and new accounting standards. Accounting for intangibles is on the agenda. Information technology is opening new ways of communicating corporate information. The time has come for a strategic look at all aspects of reporting by listed companies so we meet the challenges of the new millennium.

The author is secretary of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Confused messages serve no purpose

IT IS the sort of question small children ask on first seeing a politician make a speech. "What's it for?" they say, and we are hard put to give a sensible reply. The same is true for a company's annual report and accounts. They have to be published by law. But it is often hard to see what their real function is. It has become so diluted and changed over the years that companies tend to communicate useful information through other channels.

No wonder that published reports and accounts came in for a rafting at last week's awards ceremony. The awards are sponsored by the Stock Exchange and the three chartered accountants' institutes in England, Ireland and Scotland. The Stock Exchange shortlists the 150 best reports and accounts of the 2,000 or so listed companies. In the words of Nigel Macdonald, the Ernst & Young partner who spoke for the judges: "A surprisingly large number of that 150 do not score particularly highly." Only 50 were rated to be very good this year, which, as Macdonald pointed out, "is not a high proportion of the original 2,000".

The reader's first requirement is to be told succinctly what the company does," he said, "and you would be surprised at how many in the top 150 do not fulfil that basic requirement." Then he launched into a list of woes. He complained about "unsubstantiated optimism and flattery". He criticised print that was too small and coloured paper which made it even harder to read. He talked of confusing colour coding, photographs that had nothing to do with the message of the report, non-zero-based graphs and, in some cases, reports where there was inconsistency between

going on. Many people now believe that the detail and narrative that aims to tell people how the company is likely to fare should be published with the preliminary results.

This is when, at the moment, the headline figures are released under relatively freeform rules. Analysts take their cue from this date in the reporting calendar. They may look in detail at the report and accounts produced weeks later, but not as a key source. The bulk of the detailed figures could be published later and filed, available on request.

Likewise, the misleading nature of published reports stems from the conflict in their purpose. "It is very common," said Macdonald, "for designers to produce a running draft which the management turns into the report." Sometimes the result is designer-driven, sometimes management drive. It always runs the risk of ending up a hybrid. Another judge, Isobel Sharp, of Arthur Andersen, put her finger on the key ingredient for a successful report. "They need people who understand the business to write them — people who have put a lot of thought into it."

One of this year's winners, Hodder Headline, the publisher, provides some pointers. It produces only 6,000 copies of its report and accounts: 1,000 go to shareholders and the remaining 5,000 to authors, agents and the press, or for use as a calling card, the corporate brochure. Mark Opzoomer, Hodder's deputy chief executive, is clear about their purpose. "People don't read it," he said, "but they flick through it and they can see we are profitable." He also believes that the report should be published at the preliminary

figures stage. In Hodder's case it is possible. It writes the report and accounts, then cuts and pastes to produce its preliminary announcement. "We are at the colour proof stage when we make our preliminary announcement," said Opzoomer. There is no reason why it could not publish the whole lot at the same time. Admittedly, Hodder has greater flexibility than some larger companies. But, as Opzoomer said, "if people spend less time on the flannel they could do it as well".

Such a system would also bring clarity back to the purpose of a published report and accounts. And it would concentrate the effort on explaining the way in which the company shareholders and stakeholders really want



ROBERT BRUCE

Forearmed by Hampel speech

ENTHUSIASTS for more openness in financial reporting who had hopes of further reform from the Hampel committee on corporate governance had their hopes dashed at the awards ceremony for the best annual report and accounts.

Sir Ronald Hampel gave the keynote address on the future of corporate governance. However, it was his body language that drew the

OTHER BUSINESS

Figured out

MEANWHILE, the judges in the award deliberately overlooked some confusing figurework in one of the winning entries. The thumbnail sketch of the finance director at Hodder Headline, the publisher, contained this sentence: "In 1996, after seven years with KPMG, he joined TVS Entertainment plc where he was appointed group finance

Lip service

BRITAIN'S finance directors are notorious for ignoring the implications of the movement to converge and harmonise accounting standards worldwide. But the rest of the world seems to be correspondingly

enthusiastic

On March 11 the International Accounting Standards Committee is holding a conference for finance directors in Brussels to discuss and explain the implications. At present, more than 150 have signed up from some 36 countries. But to look at the list it would seem that finance chiefs from Brazil to Estonia and from Hong Kong to the US are more alert to the challenges than their UK counterparts. Something to do with a lack of stiff upper lip probably.

ROBERT BRUCE

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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TRAINING AND ENTERPRISE COUNCILS

FOCUS

Edward Fennell introduces a three-page report on Investors in People and other Tec initiatives

Get the best from staff

Last week, at a small ceremony typical of those held monthly throughout Britain, 16 organisations in Fareham, Hampshire, were presented with Investor in People plaques. The event was organised by the local Training and Enterprise Council (Tec) and what made it telling was the kind of businesses involved.

Ranging from a manufacturer of fire detectors and the Portsmouth Fort Posthouse through to a private hospital and New Forest District Council, a virtual cross-section of local industry, commerce and the public sector was represented.

As individual organisations, each of these 16 had shown that they were clearly focused and were developing their people to achieve their business objectives. But perhaps even more important, as the nation takes stock of itself in the election season, they provided a human dimension to the economic picture.

Whatever success the Chancellor of the Exchequer might claim for himself, the real substance of prosperity is being created by well-managed organisations whose staff know what they are doing and where they are going.

There are now plenty of such organisations to be found. Providing evidence of this, NatWest Corporate Business Services in the City of London will make history in a few days' time when it becomes the 5,000th Investor in People to receive recognition.

The NatWest CBS event, like the Hampshire presentation, is a credit to the local Training and Enterprise Council. It is the network of Tec and their counterparts, the Local Enterprise Councils (LECs) in Scotland and the Training & Employment Agency in Northern Ireland which are responsible for promoting the Investors in People standard. For them, it represents probably the most important single instrument for helping local business wise up to better management.

Amid a surfeit of "flavour of



Colt International of Hampshire has become acknowledged as an Investor in People

the month" management techniques, the Investors in People standard has won through because it is free of gimmicks. The standard is "owned" by industry and stems from a careful analysis of tried and tested good practice.

Bearing this out was the guest speaker at the Fareham

who have achieved the standard are reporting that they are increasing market share, increasing productivity and making better use of inventory.

"For private sector organisations, that means better profitability while those in the public sector can show that

Although the Government places considerable emphasis on the importance of Investors in People, the most powerful advocates come from the business community. For example, Phillips the auction house, rated number three in Britain, has recently received recognition. What inspired Roger

'The standard saved us money and enabled us to set our goals and employ staff to achieve them'

event, Dr Barry Seward-Thompson of the human resource consultancy, Working Vision. At the invitation of the Tec, he summed up for the successful companies the evidence which is emerging nationally about the benefits of being an Investor in People.

"We're now seeing results in three main areas. Firstly, the bottom-line. Organisations

they are achieving more with their resources," he said.

"Secondly, there are clear signs that quality is increasing. There is better delivery compliance, greater customer satisfaction levels and fewer complaints. And, third, there is evidence of better-motivated staff. Absenteeism drops and there are more positive contributions from staff."

Hollett, the managing director, to get involved was hearing Tom Farmer, the head of Kwik-Fit, extolling its virtues.

"Tom Farmer is an amazingly dynamic guy," Mr Hollett says, "and hearing him talk about Investors in People with such energy convinced me that there was something worthwhile in it." Phillips achieved the standard last year and Mr

Hollett feels that this has contributed to the cohesiveness of the organisation at a time when it has expanded considerably and is seeking greater market-share.

Meanwhile, Mr Farmer's enthusiasm for Investors in People has led him to join the national board of Investors in People UK (which acts as the custodian of the standard) where he is joined by people like Don Beattie, the chief executive, personnel, of the BOC group and John Hazelwood, CBE DL, the general manager of Birds Eye Walls.

But Investors in People is definitely not just for the larger players (even though national targets and publicity were initially focused on them). Sue Todd, for example, is the managing director of Poly-media Limited, a very small, regional, public relations agency. In the recession, she was keenly aware that she needed a management framework to help her to stay focused on her objectives and deploy her very limited staff — and very small budget — to best effect.

"I realised that if we were to survive we needed to be more professional at everything we did or we would go under," she says. "The standard gave us a methodology which saved us money and enabled us to 'complete the loop' from setting our goals to employing and developing staff to achieve them."

All of that was more than three years ago. Sue Todd and Polymedia have now gone through the assessment process not once but twice — and found that it was even more valuable the second time because it stopped her from becoming complacent. She too is now a board member of Investors in People UK.

She says: "I'm currently chairing a small business project which is designed to cut out the jargon and make the terminology of the standard more relevant to small businesses. I've seen the benefit. I want other small businesses to do so as well."

Discover the secret of business success

Soon, businesses will start to look conspicuous if they do not have the Investor in People insignia on their notepad or hanging on their office walls.

The fact that the landmark 5,000th recognition has now been reached means that the targets set for Investors in People — 70 per cent of organisations employing 200 or more people and 35 per cent of those employing 50 or more — should be achieved.

Tony Shaw, managing director of NatWest Corporate Banking Services, says that the Investors in People standard was a useful tool to investigate CBS, giving a focus and clarity to "people issues". CBS performed better on most measures and achieved higher results than the rest of the organisation and considerably better than the financial services sector generally.

Leadership from the front is characteristic of successful bids for Investors in People status. As Mary Chapman, chief executive of Investors in People UK, says: "Because Investors in People is about business development, it has to be linked to the direction in which the business is going. That direction is determined at board level, so it is critical that the people who take decisions centrally should be the ones who lead the drive to achieve the standard."

In building the profile of the standard, Investors in People UK has recognised the importance of winning the support of high quality, successful organisations. With companies such as BT, TNT and Unilever acting as role models the message is easier to communicate. In a nutshell, Investors in People UK is saying: "Here is the secret of business success for the UK's leading organisations. It is also available to you if you develop your people in line with the standard."

Investors in People UK is now working with a range of partners to promote wider take-up of the standard. At the

local level the Tec, LEC and the T&EA are the most important agents. In many cases, however, it is more appropriate that national recognition should be given for an organisation which has, say, branches or outlets scattered throughout Britain. In these cases the national assessment centre team at Investors in People UK's London offices will become involved to manage the assessment.

The central team also plays a very important part in approaching trade federations and sectoral bodies — in fields such as water and hotel and catering — to promote



Mary Chapman: committed

take-up within specific industries. There are also close relationships with both the CBI and the TUC, which have been supportive of the standard since it was launched.

Whatever the size of the organisation, however, the standard has to be applied consistently. When assessors visit firms seeking recognition they interview people from the most senior to the most junior levels — as well as those in obscure janitorial and housekeeping positions — in order to check that the standard is being met.

It is this rigour which underlies the standard's value and why it is now being

sought out by customers and potential employees alike. As Mary Chapman says: "People are becoming increasingly choosy. We see that recognised organisations are now becoming the 'employers of choice' especially for careers advisers and among those staff who are in demand in the employment market."

Evidence of this is provided by Roy Lecky-Thompson, formerly head of personnel at the Bank of England and now a human resources consultant, who advises up-and-coming managers in financial services to look out for recognised organisations when they plan their career moves in the City. Meanwhile Philip Sharon, a successful hairdressing chain in the Thames Valley, finds that it gets a better reception from school careers teachers for its apprenticeship vacancies now it has the standard.

The growing credibility of Investors in People also helps organisations to stand out when they are competing for business. Bexley College, in Kent, for example, finds that, having gained the standard, it is now taken much more seriously when it pitches to commercial clients for consultancy work and training services. "Potential clients feel that our staff are quality-assured because we are recognised Investors in People," Mildred Howse, a member of the senior management team at the college, says.

With such a range of organisations having reached the standard — and that also includes breweries, law firms, retailers and central government departments and agencies — those who do not have it will find themselves under increasing pressure to do something about it.

As Mary Chapman puts it: "If every organisation in the UK were recognised Investors in People then Britain would be even more competitive and better able to adapt to changes in the future."



Soldier, Soldier: the Army now believes that attaining a recognised qualification is an integral part of the Army

Civilian exams invade the Army

Colonel Robin Field-Smith would like to see national vocational qualifications worked into the plot line of the television drama *Soldier, Soldier* as NVQs are now an integral part of the Army.

From the headquarters of Personnel and Training Command in Wiltshire, Colonel Field-Smith explains that attaining recognised qualifications, from NVQ level 1 to membership of a professional body, up to an MBA, is essential to a military career.

With 90 per cent of the Army aged under 30, training and qualifications appropriate for young people are particularly important. Army apprenticeships are becoming Modern Apprenticeships, leading to NVQ level 3. The Modern Apprenticeship framework is being applied to technical apprenticeships and will cover other training areas where possible. A new Army Foundation College will give between 1,000 and 1,500 school-leavers the opportunity to pursue developmental education and training as the beginning of their career in the forces. Colonel Field-Smith says that the college will "kick-start the military skills and personal development of future NCOs". The Army recruits 15,000 young people a year and over 2,000 of them will be able to train as apprentices or attend

Modern qualifications are now essential to a military career

the Army Foundation College, leaving around 13,000 to go through the ordinary soldier route. These days all soldiers who complete Initial Training, lasting ten to eleven weeks, achieve an NVQ level 1. "Research shows soldiers really value the award. For some it is the first formal recognition of success," Colonel Field-Smith says.

He believes that the Army will be dovetailing with government policy on the National Record of Achievement, to be relaunched next year. "After completing NVQ level 1, soldiers will be able to complete further vocational units which will be recorded on their record of achievement, kept since school. These achievements include sport, adventure training and other qualifications and give soldiers a portfolio to take on to their next employer."

The majority of soldiers will have a next employer, as the Army emphasises that it now offers a first career, but rarely a career for life. Colonel Field-Smith explains: "Competency-based training is nothing new in the military. But the post-Cold War manpower cuts, brought in by the *Options for Change* report, meant that we

had to look at training that fitted personal development needs and career aspirations, as well as military needs. That's why we focused the linkages between our internal training and recognised qualifications. Former soldiers needed recognised qualifications to sell on to civilian employers. So training for recognised qualifications begins from day one to the day you leave."

The Army's pursuit of external qualifications is twofold. First it helps the resettlement of former soldiers into civilian life, and secondly the opportunity for qualification attracts the right calibre of new recruits. "The Army has a genuine claim to be a good employer, offering a good remuneration package and chances for personal development and this will attract recruits. And once they're in, we offer continuing development so soldiers will stay with us because they know they will be well off," Colonel Field-Smith says. He continues that the army is part of society, not separate from it, so the Army must reflect modern career aspirations.

Just how modern the

Army's attitude is to training can be seen in its adoption of the Institute of Personnel Development qualifications for officers training at Sandhurst, together with support for Open University qualifications and MBAs throughout their careers.

"About 80 per cent of our officer intake is graduates, but we need competency in leadership, management and military skills together with intellectual ability," the colonel says.

Incorporating the Army's need for global mobility into achieving the Investors in People standard is a challenge. As part of the Ministry of Defence the Army is committed to achieving Investors in People standard by the year 2000.

"As a workforce we move around the world at short notice, at the behest of others. So while we offer organisational stability, there is unavoidable instability of place of employment. IIP can't be done just like that," he says.

Despite the challenges, Colonel Field-Smith believes the external recognition of IIP will move the Army from good practice to best. "We are determined to match our activities at every level of the Army, against the indicators of the IIP standard."

SUSAN GRAY

Chris: NVQ Wholesaling, Warehousing & Stores

Vicky: NVQ Food & Drink Manufacturing Operations

Adele: NVQ Management

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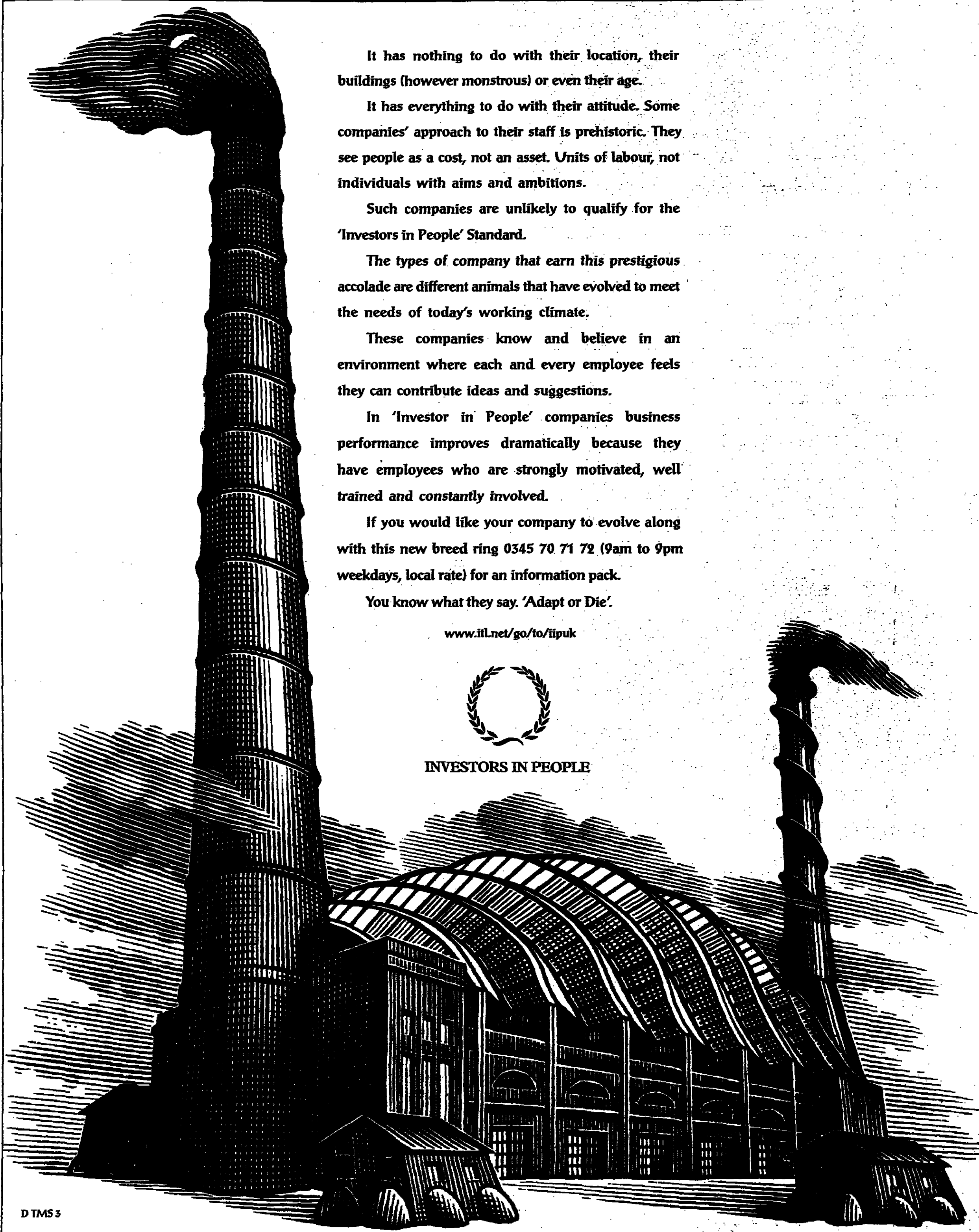
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FILM 1

Michael Caine talks about his "labour of love", playing a dying gangster in *Blood and Wine*



FILM 2

Out on video this week is a typically whimsical movie from François Truffaut...



FILM 3

... plus Arnie Schwarzenegger at his rambunctious best amid the blood and mayhem of *Eraser*...



FILM 4

... and Bill Clinton's 1992 election campaign observed, warts and all, in *The War Room*

Nice work, if you want it

At the age of nearly 64 Michael Caine has good reason to feel that the fates have blessed him. He enjoys a long-standing happy marriage; his film career has brought him star status — and an Oscar — and he has amassed a considerable personal fortune, the reports of which, he says, are greatly exaggerated in their various estimates of between £16 million and £40 million.

"I keep wondering where it is," he says. "My wife asks, is it under the bed? I haven't got anything like that amount, but what I do have is complete freedom to do what I like — and that's enough money for me."

The money does help, of course, to keep him in the style to which he has become accustomed. He keeps a small apartment in Miami — where he has recently opened yet another restaurant — for the winter months, but his main home is his Oxfordshire mansion on the banks of the Thames. It is the sort of place, he says, that he always dreamt of when he was young.

In terms of his career freedom means being able to choose the roles that appeal to him; rather than, as he sometimes did in the old days, take a part because the money was good. A good example of this independence is his new role as a dying gangster who plans a million-dollar heist with a wine merchant (Jack Nicholson) in *Blood and Wine*.

According to some, the film contains the best work Caine has done since *Hannah* and *Her Sisters*, for which he won his Oscar.

It takes more than money to get Michael Caine in front of a camera these days, writes Carol Allen

"It's not a very big part, but it was a labour of love and I think it shows in the performance," Caine says. "*Hannah* was a labour of love too, because you don't get millions of dollars from Woody Allen and that wasn't a major part either. I seem to relax when I don't have to carry the movie."

Caine was drawn to the character — who is not unlike the gangster he played in *Mona Lisa*, grown older and fallen on hard times — partly because the film offered his first opportunity to work with Nicholson, a friend of 30 years' standing. But another reason was the project itself, which he sees as a contemporary film noir. "The characters drive it rather than the crime or the special effects and stunts. And I loved the sleazy Florida background. It's like the movies I saw when I was a kid, and now I'm in one."

The east London gangster persona he brings to the role raises once again the image Caine has had ever since playing Albie and Harry Palmer in his youth: that of the "professional Cockney". But, as he points out with slight irritation, "I've never been paid any money for being a

Cockney." And if you listen carefully to that famous Caine voice, it is more the quality of tone — gravelly and slightly adonoidal — that gives it its distinctive quality, rather than vowels and diction.

"It's got nothing to do with London or Cockneys or class," he says. "That's the way I talk and that's it. Cary Grant and James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart all had their own voices, but no one went on about where they came from, because not only did they not know, they weren't interested."

While *Blood and Wine* marks the first time Caine has been seen in a significant big screen role since 1992, he has not been idle in the past few years. In *Bullets to Beijing*, a made-for-cable television movie which at one point was mooted for a UK cinema release, he reprised the role of a now middle-aged Harry Palmer. And he recently completed a four-hour mini-series version of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, playing Captain Nemo.

The most interesting of his forthcoming films, however, is the one he shot last summer in South Africa, in which he plays F.W. de Klerk opposite Sidney Poitier as Nelson Mandela — a project he talks about with relish. "Sidney and I made an anti-apartheid film in 1975 called *The Wilby Conspiracy*, after which we were persona non grata in South Africa," he says. "One of the reasons for our doing this was to go back as the two Presidents of the country."



"I relax when I don't have to carry the movie": Michael Caine with the pressure off

He is due to start work in April on the film *Shadow Run*, written by Desmond Lowden from his own novel. Once more it is a "labour of love", this time for Geoffrey Reeve, with whom he made *The Whistle Blower*. "It's a small English thriller, very quirky and quite strange. It's the kind

of thing I pick up on and if I'm interested I do it. I play a Cockney again, a real London gangster, but there's a lot more to it than that. I started to read the script, it intrigued me and I thought, I've never seen anything like this before." After that he would like to do another project with Nicholson, this time something completely different from *Blood and Wine*.

"We think we're very funny together," he says. "We're not funny in this movie, but we could be, so we're looking for a comedy." *Blood and Wine* opens on March 7

Total Truffaut

L'AMOUR EN FUIITE
Artificial Eye, 15, 1979
This is the last of Truffaut's series following the adventures of Jean-Paul Léaud's Antoine Doinel, the character first introduced more than 20 years before in *Les quatre cents coups*. He is still the ditherer, chasing whims and women; and though Truffaut engineers delightful moments, the coy artificiality of the exercise proves a little wearing over time. But Truffaut completists should be happy. Another of the director's film from the 1970s, *Une belle fille comme moi*, is also available.

BOSTON KICKOUT
First Independent, 18, 1996
Promising first feature from a new British director, Paul Hills, about youngsters at loose ends in Stevenage. The script attempts to stuff too much drama into 100 minutes, but the film is strengthened by fresh performances and a sincere desire to reflect the lives of British youth. With John Simm and Emer McCourt. Available to rent.

ERASER
Warner, 18, 1996
Not the sleekest blockbuster around, but if you want to see Arnold Schwarzenegger dispatching alligators with the cry "You're luggage!", this dishevelled concoction of popular ingredients is your big chance. Arnie works for the Federal Witness Protection programme; the baddies want to ship the ray-guns to nasty people overseas. With Vanessa Williams and James Caan. Director, Charles Russell. Available to rent.

THE WAR ROOM
Downtown Video, E, 1993
Absolutely riveting documentary from American veteran D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus, in which the camera becomes a fly on the wall during Bill Clinton's 1992 elec-

tion campaign. Star of the show, though, is not the President-to-be, but James Carville, dubbed in the business "the Ragin' Cajun", the political strategist whose unflinching enthusiasm and wily ways helped to ensure Clinton's victory.

WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
Warner, U, 1971
Matilda is not the only film adaptation of Roald Dahl. Apart from *The Witches*, there is also this treasure, now 25 years old, based on Dahl's delightfully macabre story about children receiving their just deserts in a confectionery factory. It was filmed in Bavaria with some unfortunate songs, wonderful bizarre sets, and a twinkling performance from Gene Wilder as the ingenious inventor of exploding candy and everlasting gobstoppers. Newly available in a remastered version.

NOTHING PERSONAL
Film Four, 18, 1995
Thaddeus O'Sullivan's drama thrusts us on to the streets of Belfast in 1975, where Roman Catholics and loyalists stage running battles, bullets rip kneecaps or worse, and fires erupt into the night sky. No sides are taken: O'Sullivan's goal is to portray the dreadful consequences of violence and fanaticism in a divided community. Michael Gambon redeems some recent bad performances as the loyalist leader trying to go softly softly; Ian Hart and James Frain chill the bones as trigger-happy fanatics. Powerful stuff, particularly in its depiction of children caught up in their parents' quarrels. Available to rent.

GEOFF BROWN

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David Sinclair

THEATRE: Women play the men in an odd Shakespeare production and a real-life musical tale

More soap, nurse

Anyone who goes to Leicester in search of freakishness will not find it in Kathryn Hunter's *Lear*. Her icy troll, steely mandarin, or smaller, thinner and paler version of Deng Xiaoping is just as plausibly male as Fiona Shaw's Richard II, and more so than Frances de la Tour's Hamlet. It is Helena Kaut-Howson's direction that is the problem.

The production opens in a modern hospital ward in which a senile-looking Hunter is discovered grizzling and watching television from a wheelchair while medics and visitors bustle. But the *East-Enders* theme-tune introduces the first moments of *Lear* or, rather, a version of that comes semi-demi-comprehensibly from the screen. And then, quite suddenly, one soap becomes another. Doctors and nurses dash about *Casualty*-fashion as Hunter has a stroke and is whisked to the crash unit behind a set of screens.

Why? Well, the programme gives a clue, offering rather a good essay about a lonely, demanding old lady seldom visited in her nursing home by the children she loves. Shakespeare's *King Lear* is undoubtedly a grim fable about parental folly and filial neglect. Kaut-Howson goes a step further. The play is a three-hour nightmare that flashes through the mind of a dying person before a coda in which the heart-monitor goes into arrest and a grave Dr Edgar steps from the screens to greet Goneril, Regan and

King Lear
Leicester Haymarket

Cordelia with the play's closing lines.

I must say, if my mum or dad died, and a consultant broke the news by telling me: "We that are young shall never see so much nor live so long," I would call my lawyer. But there is another, more serious way in which play and production fail to gel. If Kaut-Howson wants to show us the pain of an abandoned parent, she has chosen the wrong performer to embody it. That is not, I repeat, because of Hunter's gender. For instance: if it is unlikely that her *Lear* would have killed the captain hanging Cordelia, it is not because there is a woman behind her old man's goatee, but because Goliaths can't be felled by 5ft Methuselahs. No, the real trouble is that Hunter's curd *Lear* does not seem to care much about his children.

She takes the crucial opening scene, with its rejections and banishments, far too calmly, and never emotionally recovers. Even some unusually incisive philosophising counts for less than it should, because you never feel it derives from personal anguish. She has her moments — a dry, nervous laugh with Marcello Magni's disappointing Fool, low wails of rage when the storm breaks, a droll, sad cuddle with Robert Pickavance's decent but uninvolved Gloucester — but the inner core is lacking.



Kathryn Hunter's *Lear* enjoys a droll, sad cuddle with Robert Pickavance's decent but uninvolved Gloucester

I often wondered if Kaut-Howson had spent too much time elaborating visual effects, too little getting her performers to explore their parts. There is much imaginative ado with hospital trolleys, wheelchairs, railway porters' trolleys, a tin bath, a vast steel wall and a chorus disconcertingly apt to transmute from Russian peasants to English-

men in khaki drapes. The storm and battle effects, with pots, cans and people hurled in from the wings, are genuinely superb. But the play needs depth, not show, and it hasn't got it from director, leading actress or supporting players at Leicester.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Blame it on my gender

Once upon a time there was a woman who wanted to play the trumpet, but in her land it was only the men who could wander from place to place making music and money from their trumpets. The people who played piano or bass or sax, they were all men as well. In the dance bands that played New Orleans, New York, Chicago and the rest of those places, you had to be a guy. So she pretended she was one, for 40 years or more, and nobody except the woman she married knew her secret till she died.

Strange but true, as they used to say on some radio programme, and Carson Kretzer has based her play on the life-lie chosen by Billy Tipton, who died as recently as

sometimes desolate expression in the eyes, but the barriers must stay up all the time.

The attempt to tell the story of a woman passing as a man in terms of a black man passing as white is bound to be awkward, since their expressed responses differ so. Still, it's a nice venue. Criswell's voice is great as she climbs to the last gentle notes of *Blame it on my Youth*, and Slade plays a pretty decent solo in *Sweet Melinda*, by James Pearson, the show's pianist and musical director.

JEREMY KINGSTON

The Slow Drag
Freedom Theatre,
Soho

1989. We can safely assume the truth came as a shock to the three sons Billy was supposed to have fathered.

Well, the elements of an intriguing play are here, and the decision to interlard the story with music from a live jazz group is obviously sensible. As we come down the stairs from Wardour Street's Freedom Cafe into the dark basement a four-piece dance-band is playing, and after a while we notice that a fifth player has joined them: clean-shaven, hair slicked down, trumpet in hand. This is Nikki Slade, playing the Billy role here called Johnny Christmas.

Making Johnny's wife a torch singer is another bright idea, especially as she is played by copper-mopped Kim Criswell, who can stalk between tables as loftily reguish as the best of them, and delivers a song with purity of tone and the air of having lived the experience herself, even when she adds a dash of irony.

A fairly bright idea is to counterpoint Johnny's presence with that of a blackish singer, played by Christopher Colquhoun, who can pass for white, or at least Hungarian (cue for a bitter joke), and confesses: "Sometimes I hate myself for being white — a little."

But the play never allows Johnny Christmas any comparable speech from the heart. Under Lisa Forrell's direction Slade gives a chin-back performance, with a wide white smile, a strangled voice, and a

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RAUTAVAARA
Angels and Visitation
Oliveira/Helsinki PO/
Segerstam
Ondine ODE 881-2 ***
(£14.49)

UNPRONOUNCEABLE it may be, but Einjuhani Rautavaara is a name with which classical audiences are rapidly having to come to grips. Barry Millington writes. The Finn's last disc for Ondine, *Angel of Light*, has become a bestseller round the world, and this sequel is even stronger, containing three pieces — all of outstanding interest.

The title work, *Angels and Visitation*, was actually composed in 1978 and was the first in Rautavaara's so-called "Angel Series". Angels represent a scourge, an ordeal to him rather than the benign figures found on Christmas cards, but his score is not all demonic. There are passages of ravishing beauty, truly staggering in their harmonic intensity, quite unlike anything you have ever heard before.

The *Isle of Bliss*, no less arresting, is a foretaste of the opera of Rautavaara's to be premiered at the Savonlinna Festival this summer, while the Violin Concerto (1976-77) is another magnificent structure in which the solo line soars above a succession of entrancing soundscapes. Elmar Oliveira is the accomplished

soloist and Lef Segerstam the excellent conductor. If you haven't sampled Rautavaara yet, delay no longer.

SCHUBERT
Der husliche Krieg
Isokos/Larsson/Orrego/
Das neue Orchester/Sperg
Opus III OPS 30-167 **
(£14.49)

SCHUBERT's bicentenary year is going to ensure that some of his 16 operas will be winkled out of their hiding places, John Higgins writes. Only a handful were performed in his lifetime and *Husliche Krieg* (*Domestic Warfare*) was not one of them. It is a one-acter, lightweight and consistently good-humoured, very loosely based on *Lysistrata* — the action is moved to the time of the Crusades — and Schubert's librettist was quick to eradicate all strands of feminism.

Schubert's bubbling orchestral score, played with verve by Christoph Sperg's Neue Orchester, ensures that no one takes any of it very seriously and that a sexual truce is just around the corner. The clarinets and oboes, trumpets and horns revel in the marches and ensembles which fill the piece. It does not make too many vocal demands and certainly does not cry out for big voices. In Opus III's young cast the two sopranos, Lisa Larsson and Soile Isokos, stand out. Our music colleges might take a look at it for an end-of-term performance.

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A model of the Universe

Peter Ackroyd on the continuing fascination with a horological tale, and the measure of distance by time

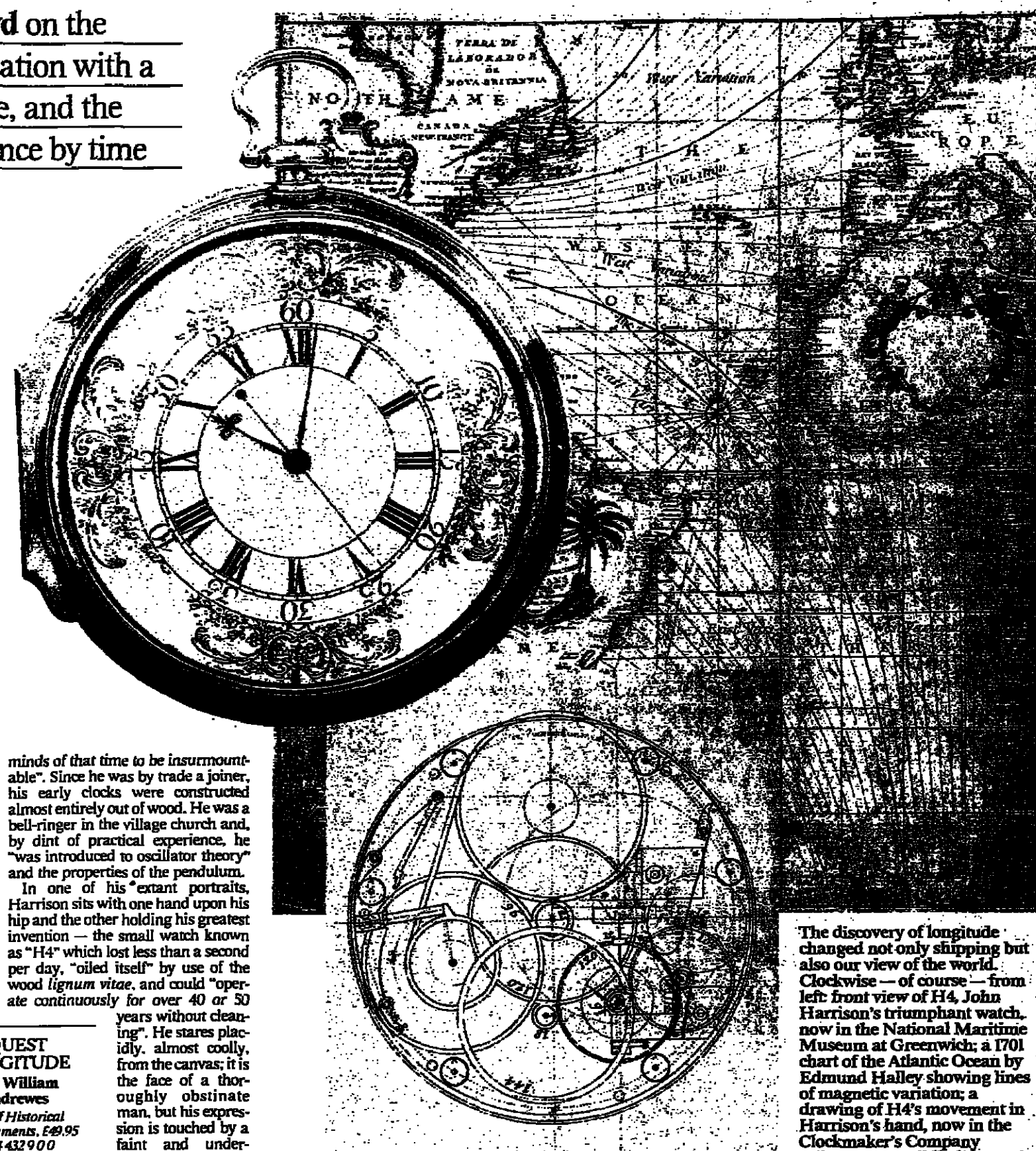
In Umberto Eco's melancholy novel, *The Island of the Day Before*, one character suggests that "the man who found a way of calculating the meridians would be master of the oceans." In that remark lies the essence of a long, weary, and, for many, profitless pursuit. Newton himself was unable to resolve the dilemmas involved, and confessed that "his head never ached but with his studies on the moon." He was concerned to discover longitude at sea by means of "lunar distance", in other words — but this book is concerned with the spectacular success which was eventually obtained by the clock.

The problem is, as one contributor to this decorative and distinguished volume puts it, "the matter of simultaneity". If one clock is set at the "local" time of departure, and the other reflects the "real" time of the traveller, then distance can be calculated with absolute precision. It sounds a simple procedure, but it took 200 years of trial and experiment to come even close to the solution. *The Quest for Longitude* is the story of how time eventually came to dominate the earth, stretching its web of lines across every ocean and region of the planet. The "quest" itself resembled that for the Holy Grail, and can plausibly be considered the single most important scientific inquiry of the pre-industrial age.

When in 1714 the British Government established a prize of £20,000 for the first reliable solution, it was a simple recognition of the fact that the determination of longitude would lead to the control of the seas. Nature, and reality itself, would then be transformed. And so it proved. The topographical and temporal grid created then can be seen as the predecessor of the electronic "net" which is now supposed to cover us. After the oceans were mapped commerce increased, an increase accompanied by great movements in population across the world as well as the rise and fall of national cultures. The final calculation of longitude, according to another recent book, led ineluctably to the emergence of the British Empire.

One man was primarily responsible for this sea-change in human affairs: his name was John Harrison, and he was an uneducated Lincolnshire joiner. He might have been invented by George Eliot, or perhaps Thomas Hardy. He was a solitary artisan, quite outside the scientific and horological profession, who by native instinct (indeed genius), invented a clock mechanism which attained what at the time was an inconceivable accuracy.

In the isolation of his cottage in the village of Barrow-upon-Humber he was able, in the words of the introduction to this volume, "to overcome problems that were thought by the greatest scientific



THE QUEST FOR LONGITUDE
Edited by William J. H. Andrews
Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments, £49.95
ISBN 0 954 432 90 0

minds of that time to be insurmountable". Since he was by trade a joiner, his early clocks were constructed almost entirely out of wood. He was a bell-ringer in the village church and, by dint of practical experience, he "was introduced to oscillator theory" and the properties of the pendulum. In one of his extant portraits, Harrison sits with one hand upon his hip and the other holding his greatest invention — the small watch known as "H4" which lost less than a second per day, "oiled itself" by use of the wood *lignum vitae*, and could "operate continuously for over 40 or 50 years without cleaning". He stares placidly, almost coolly, from the canvas; it is the face of a thoroughly obstinate man, but his expression is touched by a faint and understandable pride.

His achievement was not, however, without anxiety and cost. A study of Harrison published last year, Dava Sobel's *Longitude*, attained considerable success — largely because it was able to relate the development of mechanism to the drama of human competition and failure. In particular the efforts of various interested parties to thwart or embarrass Harrison. In his attempt to win the prize money of £17,400, guaranteed the interest of a narrative which even in its more theoretical aspects was not devoid of excitement: the relationship of the astronomer royal, Nevil Maskelyne, to the inventor rivals that between Salieri and Mozart.

The Quest for Longitude is a more general and comprehensive, if necessarily more impersonal, account of

the greatest scientific discovery of the 18th century. It is a collection of essays, written by various specialists and historians, which places Harrison's achievement within the context of that century's science. It is in many respects a compendium of mathematical and astronomical conundra which were steadily resolved within the lifetime of Harrison himself, and there are technical but not arcane essays here on *Longitude* and the *Satellites of Jupiter* and *The Scandalous Neglect of Harrison's Regulator Science*.

One or two issues, however, remain unresolved. Some contributors press the claims of "pure" science in their assessment of Harrison's genius; the quest for longitude then becomes the pursuit of intellectual

certainly. But other essays emphasise the commercial, and even colonial, imperatives behind the inventor's experiments. It is a permanent argument and is, perhaps, best left unresolved. Science and commerce are aspects of the same unfolding reality; one cannot manifest itself without the other, and they may be locked in an eternal embrace. One other question might usefully be asked: was the clock modelled upon the "celestial clock" of the heavens, as some people believe, or was the universe transformed into a great "mechanical model" only after the invention of the clock?

Certainly the instruments depicted in this volume are objects of great subtlety and complexity. William Hogarth, the exponent of the "line of

The discovery of longitude changed not only shipping but also our view of the world. Clockwise — of course — from left: front view of H4, John Harrison's triumphant watch, now in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich; a 1701 chart of the Atlantic Ocean by Edmund Halley showing lines of magnetic variation; a drawing of H4's movement in Harrison's hand, now in the Clockmaker's Company collection at Guildhall

beauty" in English painting, described Harrison's third marine timekeeper as "one of the most exquisite movements ever made". They are indeed works of art, and demonstrate that mechanism itself may have a human face.

That is why the central figure remains that of John Harrison himself: he was one of the first English inventors fully to understand the relationship between technology and theoretical science and, as a result, his was "some of the most valuable scientific research conducted during the 18th century". Since his timekeeper helped to create an empire, and fuel an industrial revolution, it might truly be claimed that this obscure joiner from Lincolnshire changed the world in which we live.

Books burnt won't light a way to peace

Martin Bell on the position of Islam in the West

Adam LeBor was one of the quieter members of the eclectic press corps in the Bosnian War's first year. I remember him also, in the BBC office in Kiseljak, as one of the least mobile. His newspaper's logistical support was limited to an overweight flak jacket, and for the rest he had to fend for himself. This he did admirably. He was a stylish writer with a fine eye for detail. He was also an Arabist, with an instinctive sympathy for the cause of the Bosnian Muslims. He came close to death on a number of occasions, especially at the start of the side war between Muslims and Croats in the Lasva Valley, which was his abrupt farewell to Bosnia. I am not sure that he relished the life of a war reporter, in which the art of survival is combined with the requirement to work a daily miracle.

Adam LeBor's departure from the war zones was providential. It enabled him to look beyond the ephemera of day-to-day filing. His book takes Sarajevo as its starting point but ranges widely into the predicament of Muslim minorities in Europe and the United States. He avoids the "I word" — fundamentalism — because of the baggage of value judgments attached to it. He is properly suspicious of old Cold Warriors seeking a substitute for the enemy they lost. He does not see an inevitable collision between the Western and Islamic worlds.

He writes astutely of the difficulties felt by Muslims in adjusting to their host societies, and of those societies' reciprocal unease. He is good on the *Satanic Verses* episode, and the damage it did in reinforcing stereotypes and bigotry. The burning of books has no place in Islamic tradition, and did much harm.

A HEART TURNED EAST
By Adam LeBor
Little, Brown, £17.50
ISBN 0 316 97803 0

But his Bosnian chapters lie in the realms of polemic. Adam LeBor seems hardly to have met a Bosnian Serb, although he did attend a press conference by Radovan Karadzic ("You who waded in blood, how can you sleep at night? I wanted to yell at him"). His description of Lords Cunningham and Owen as "drones in suits" dishonours the record of two men who risked their lives to bring peace to Bosnia. Nor was the Serbs' pre-emptive strike an attack on Muslim Bosnia, so much as an attack on the Bosnia in which mosques and churches and synagogues nestled together on one of the fault lines of Europe.

That Bosnia has gone for ever. The Dayton Agreement nailed its coffin down. Adam LeBor provides the best account that I have read of the Islamisation of the Bosnians of Travnik and Zenica. In the end the Serbs' prophecies proved self-fulfilling and they helped to create the religious separatism that they feared.

The Bosnian Muslims were — and in large measures still are — European in habits and attitudes. They are ethnically indistinguishable from their neighbours. They were never any threat until perceived as such.

The spate of Bosnia books will doubtless continue (I am myself mildly responsible, having written one). Adam LeBor has added his singular contribution. His opening chapters are a Bosnia rant. But the rest of the book is a voyage of discovery and a valuable exploration.



Bosnian Serb and Muslim soldiers near Bihac, 1994

Technology distinguished from magic

The advance of the computer seems obvious only in retrospect. Unlike many great inventions, it solves problems we never knew we had. At each stage, it builds a market: first solving scientific problems, then helping to manage organisations, finally becoming everyman's handmaid at home or at work.

Nobody planned this, or even imagined it possible. True, there have always been visionaries who dreamed of libraries of information available at the touch of a button. Yet when the first electronic computers appeared at the end of the Second World War, it looked as if a dozen or so would be enough to satisfy every imaginable need of the United States economy.

Even when computers were firmly established in business and generating huge incomes for IBM, the first personal computer seemed like a joke. With no screen, no keyboard, and not enough memory to do

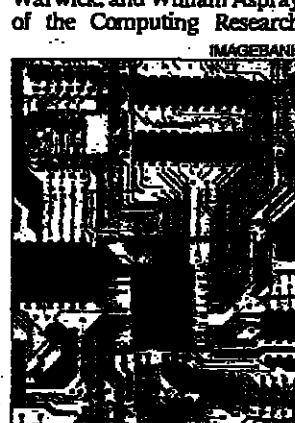
Nigel Hawkes

COMPUTER
A History of the Information Machine
By Martin Campbell-Kelly and William Aspray
Basic Books, £20
ISBN 0 465 02889 2

anything useful, the Altair 8800 was strictly for the nerds. They fed in programs in binary code by flicking switches, the only evidence of success being a flickering pattern of neon bulbs.

Yet like the crystal set pioneers of the 1920s who built their own radio sets before there was anything to listen to, the computer hobbyists of the 1970s have had the last laugh. Given an enabling technology, the microprocessor, these young enthusiasts acted as midwives to a host of new software companies, reinventing the computer as a quite different kind of product.

Most computer histories spend too long on the preliminaries, and lay heavy weight on technology. The story of Charles Babbage and his thwarted ambition to mechanise calculation in the 19th century has become all-too-familiar. Martin Campbell-Kelly, reader in computer science at the University of Warwick, and William Aspray of the Computing Research



Vital link circuit board

Association in Washington, DC, take a different approach. They trace the computer's development in a social and business setting. They are especially good on the prehistory of the companies which eventually came to dominate computing, above all IBM.

From the launch of the 360 series in 1964, "Big Blue" dominated the industry by a combination of cautious technological advance and first-class salesmanship. By the time it decided to enter the personal computer market in 1980, IBM was the world's biggest producer of software, as well as dominating the hardware market.

Yet it had no faith in its ability to write the "quick and dirty" software needed for this new kind of product and decided to buy in an operating system from outside. After first talking to a man called Gary Kildall of Data Research — who blew the opportunity of a lifetime — it approached Bill Gates of Microsoft, who then

employed 32 people in rented offices in Seattle.

Gates had no suitable program either, nor the capabilities to develop one in time. But he won the contract, and bought the software he needed for \$30,000 from a company called Seattle Computer Products. He named it MS-DOS and on the strength of it, built what is now the fifth largest corporation in the United States. The income provided by MS-DOS provided exactly the kind of security that IBM had once enjoyed, enabling Microsoft to survive the shocks that carried off most of the other software houses.

To use a modern computer it is not necessary to understand it, but anybody curious about the genesis of this extraordinary technology could hardly find a better primer. The authors have traced a complex history clearly and entertainingly. It leaves you marvelling at how much has been achieved, how fast.

A dangerous case of like mother, like daughter

Elaine Feinstein

THE KEEPSAKE
By Kirsty Gunn
Granta, £14.99
ISBN 1 86207 013 X

and skin as the man who has abandoned her. And as the girl tells her own story, she begins to invent that father. It is not at first clear just how much is the child's imagination. If she creates her un-

known father's life before she was born, does she also fantasise her mother's sexual abuse? The significance of the eponymous keepsake, the skin that hangs over the couch of a single room shared by mother and daughter, is only revealed late in the novel.

First in dreams, and then in a dream-like reality, the daughter becomes her dead mother and lives out her life for her; she finds herself recognised as someone who wants to be imprisoned and

hurt. Soon she is living in a quiet room at the top of a lover's house, from which she only descends to relish mutilated bodies in his books, a passage that brings to mind both Bluebeard's castle and Angela Carter. The novel becomes a fairy tale Gothic, a page-turning horror story.

Gunn uses the pronouns "he" and "she" as if all the men and women in her story blur together when they take sexual pleasure in the infliction of pain, as if that were an

irresistible inheritance. It gave me some pause for thought as a registration of female sexuality in the last years of this century. Are the fashionable rib cages of our models and the current awareness of paedophilia part of the same sickness? It is hard to deny pertinence to Gunn's extension of the anorexic female wish to please.

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Robert Skidelsky on an argument for communitarianism which attempts to bridge the gap between the State and the individual



Sacks: well-stocked mind

The Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, comes from the prophetic not apocalyptic tradition of Judaism. To be sure, there are traces of the Apocalypse in his book, but his message is hopeful. Things are very bad in our society, but a people can survive, and prosper, if it follows the paths of virtue laid down by its teachers and prophets. From the hard historical experience of the Jews, for whom individualism, self-interest, and social cohesion was the key to survival, Sacks has fashioned a modern argument for "communitarianism" — the missing ground, as he sees it, between the State and the individual in contemporary British politics.

The central weakness of the book is Dr Sacks's failure to link up the tradition from

which he speaks with the politics he espouses. The nugget of morality at the heart of his account comes wrapped up in the cotton wool of contemporary fashion. "Civility" — the key word in modern communitarian discourse — already suggests social distancing. We can and should be "civil" to strangers; it is odd to talk about being civil to one's family or friends.

To offset this fuzziness at the edges, *The Politics of Hope* exhibits many virtues. It is very well written, and full of arresting phrases as well as apt quotations from thinkers like Tocqueville and Alasdair MacIntyre. It is, above all, wholesome, the product of a civilised, intelligent, well-stocked mind. If Dr Sacks shrinks the hardest questions, he has probably done as well as one can do with the moral

Cure for moral ills

THE POLITICS OF HOPE

By Jonathan Sacks
Cape £14.99
ISBN 0 224 04329 3

welfare state was built on the "nationalisation of responsibility" and the "privatisation of morality". Between them they crowded out the intermediate networks which had hitherto sustained a free society. A powerful metaphor for our flattened social landscape is the municipal tower block, which locks individuals into isolation behind the façade of state planning.

The task, then, is to retrieve

the "ecology of freedom" from both collectivism and individualism, by recovering old virtues and building new "mediating structures". At this point one becomes uncomfortably aware of the cotton wool, but there are still flashes of the diamond. Dr Sacks is unpromising about the family: "If we have any responsibilities at all, then we must have moral responsibilities to those we brought into being... If we have a duty to fulfil any other undertaking, we have a duty to honour the pledge of marriage... If marriage is holy, adultery is a sin. If it is moral, then adultery is wrong."

But what is to be done? Sacks is sensible and modest.

He believes, rightly I think, that, given some encouragement, societies can heal themselves. The task of intellectual and spiritual leaders is to give ordinary people a usable moral vocabulary. Politicians should concern themselves with the long-term consequences of legislation for "human character and the institutions within which it is formed and exercised".

This cruder of summaries hardly does justice to the many subtleties and felicities in Sacks's argument. Central to all clear thinking on these matters are the distinctions he makes between individuality and individualism. A set of moral rules flexibly applied is infinitely better than the pretence that there are no rules, that moral discourse can be "non-judgmental". The real treason of the clerics is to have

left "the whole framework of traditional morality... families, friendships, loyalties and the codes of obligation which sustained them — inherently inarticulate."

The present dilemma was more or less summed up by Livy 2,000 years ago: "We have reached a point where we cannot reach either our vices or their cure." There is no shortage of penetrating analysis of our plight but as soon as anyone proposes to do anything, the discussion veers off into platitudes. I interpret communitarianism, perhaps wrongly, as the latest of these evasions, which is another way of saying that I prefer Dr Sacks the moralist to Dr Sacks the politician.

Lord Skidelsky is Professor of Political Economy at Warwick University.

He had an angel's tongue

Karen Armstrong enjoys a vigorous reappraisal of a visionary Apostle

Few men of genius have been as consistently misunderstood and vilified as St Paul. He is accused of turning the simple, loving message of Jesus into a restrictive, complex theological system. Paul is reviled as a misogynist, an authoritarian, and an anti-Semite, whose dark view of human nature laid the foundations for some of the worst abuses of Christianity. Even though in recent decades scholars have tried to correct this distorted view of Paul, people seem reluctant to abandon it.

For some, it has acquired the status of a received idea and, as such, is somehow necessary to their view of themselves and their cultural and religious identity.

A. N. Wilson's admirable and compelling biography should encourage many to revise their view of the Apostle, if only because, despite its sound scholarship, it is destined to reach a wider audience than most learned studies. Wilson shows clearly that without Paul Christianity would have been impossible and, indeed, that the gospel portrait of Jesus has been so profoundly influenced by Paul's theology that it is impossible for us to separate the two.

One of the great strengths of Wilson's book is that it reveals the extent of our ignorance about the origins of Christianity. This is especially important at a time when believers attach great importance to the historicity of the Gospels and the inerrancy of scripture. By guiding his readers through the minefield of New Testament scholarship, Wilson not only shows that such iron certainty is mis-

placed but that Paul and most of his contemporaries would have been bemused by our 20th-century conceptions of faith. Paul himself was cavalier in his reading of the Bible and on many important issues was content to let Christians make up their own minds.

In fact, as Wilson cogently observes, Paul would have been dismayed by the Churches today. Like Jesus, he had no intention of founding a new religion. He always considered himself to be a Jew and his passionate polemic about the validity of the Law of Moses was, in Paul's view, an internal debate within Jewry about the nature of Judaism. Convinced that the End of Time was at hand, Paul was not attempting to create an alternative to Judaism in Christianity.

There was no time to establish a new religious tradition, nor was there any point since, Paul believed, the practices of religion could neither help nor save humanity. It was only the God who had been present in Jesus who could bring salvation. Paul's genius was to mythologise Jesus, so that He became an interior reality for His converts, the ultimate goal of the religious quest. It was Paul's poetic vision which enabled faith in Christ to survive long after the memories of the historical Jesus had faded.

Paul was no anti-Semite: he was racked by the difficulties of being a Jew in the Roman Empire, which he greatly admired. He was no misogynist: women were fully involved in his mission. Those passages which do relegate women to an inferior status were not written by Paul



Paul had the genius to mythologise Jesus: the Apostle in a late 15th-century German engraving

himself, but by other, later writers. Paul had his faults, but, as Wilson shows in this generous, engaging study, they are not those attributed to him by his modern detractors. There is pathos in our last glimpse of Paul in this book: in Spain, at the ends of the earth, waiting for a Christ who never returned.

Karen Armstrong's *In The Beginning: A New Reading of the Book of Genesis*, published by HarperCollins, priced £14.99.

Building a tower of babble

IN 1906 at the Madison Square Roof Garden a millionaire shot dead Stanford White, the famous New York architect, who had seduced the millionaire's wife. Ninety years later the architect's great-granddaughter has turned family historian. In *The Architect of Desire*,

Suzannah Lessard returns as often to that turn-of-the-century murder scene as she does to scenes from her own childhood on the estate her grandfather acquired on Long Island. The crime of passion, the publicity attending the millionaire Harry K. Thaw's trial for murder, and the

revelations about White's predilection for young girls filled the newspapers for years.

At Box Hill in Long Island, where White's widow Bessie remained, where their son Larry raised his family, and where ultimately his daughter raised Suzannah, the subject was never aired — until the 1980s, when a

father. The aggressive impulses of her uncle Johnny, who had been hit over the head by an over-zealous frau-let in 1930s Germany, were unchecked. Another uncle, Bobby, indulged in sexually overt ban dances with the author while her parents and his wife stood by. She details a rape of one cousin by another, and her own father's sexual abuse of herself and her sisters when they were children. Lessard's expressed view is that a seminal meeting with her sisters in the late 1980s, where they discussed their father's behaviour for the first time, cured a "paralytic

sis" that had affected her writing for years. Soon after she embarked on writing this narrative.

WOULD she had not! Or rather, would that she had resolved to have this weighty document privately printed, in the good old tradition of family memoirs. Doubtless of value to Lessard as therapy, and almost as certainly of interest to members of her family present and future, *The Architect of Desire* is in the end an unattractive blast of rage posing as memoir, a personal history long on castigation and short on humour.

Long ago Jane Austen identified Sir Walter Elliott as a man whose favourite reading was his own entry in the Baronetage. But to be fair, he didn't expect anyone else to share in his enjoyment. Lessard has made a crucial mistake in expecting us all to find her and her relations as interesting as she herself has found them to be.

Flora Fraser

THE ARCHITECT OF DESIRE
Beauty and Danger in the Stanford White Family
By Suzannah Lessard
Waldenfield & Nicholson, £20
ISBN 0 297 81940 2

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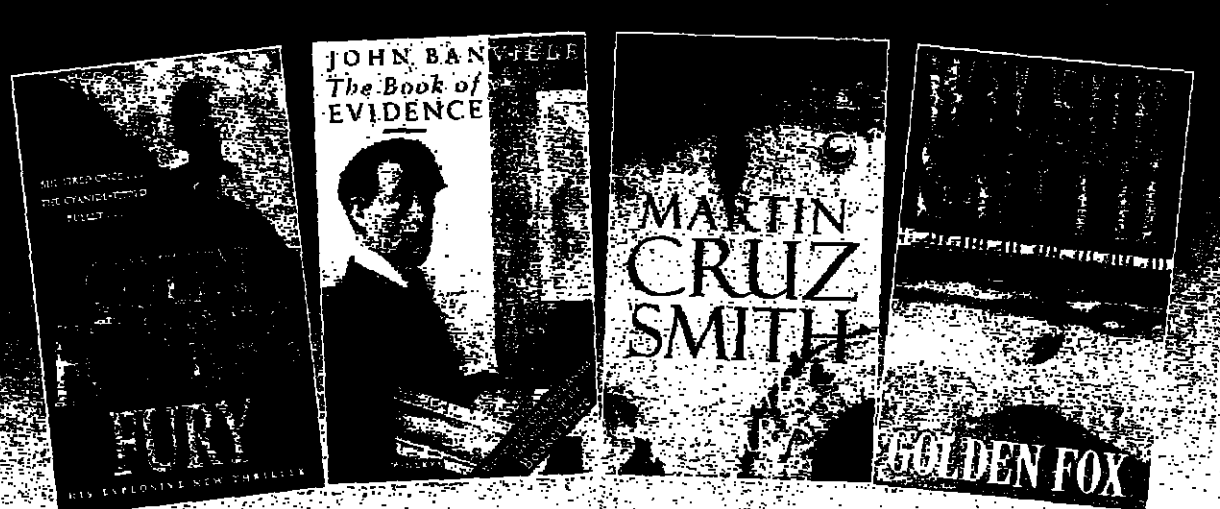
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CHANGING TIMES

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Rehabilitation period for endorsement

Power v Provincial Insurance plc

Before Lord Justice Staughton, Lord Justice Pill and Lord Justice Mummery
[Judgment February 18]

An order for endorsement of a licence following a conviction for driving under the influence of drink or drugs was not an order imposing on the convicted person a "disability, prohibition or other penalty" within the meaning of section 5(6) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 for the purpose of determining the appropriate rehabilitation period in respect of the conviction.

The Court of Appeal allowed by a majority, Lord Justice Mummery dissenting, an appeal by the plaintiff, Gary Power, against the order of Judge Michael Baker in Worthing County Court on February 20, 1996, whereby he ruled, on a preliminary issue in proceedings against the defendant, Provincial Insurance plc, that the plaintiff's drink/driving offence dated July 30, 1986 was not spent by September 5, 1991 and that the plaintiff therefore was not a rehabilitated person for the purposes of the 1974 Act on that date.

Section 5 of the 1974 Act provides: "(8) Where in respect of a conviction an order was made

imposing on the person convicted any disqualification, disability, prohibition or other penalty, the rehabilitation period applicable to the sentence shall be a period beginning with the date of conviction and ending on the date on which the disqualification, disability or penalty (as the case may be) ceases or ceases to have effect."

Mr Richard Huscroft for the plaintiff, Mr Edwin Glasgow, QC and Mr Mark James for the defendant.

LORD JUSTICE STAUGHTON said that on July 31, 1986 the plaintiff was convicted of driving while unfit through drink or drugs, contrary to section 5(1) of the Road Traffic Act 1972. He was fined and disqualified from driving for 21 months and his licence was ordered to be endorsed.

On September 5, 1991, the plaintiff filed in a proposal form for insurance of a motor vehicle with the defendant. At the time being questioned by the defendant, the plaintiff answered "No".

The plaintiff claimed on his insurance and the defendant sought to avoid the policy by reason of the plaintiff's answer. The plaintiff started an action

against the defendant in the county court.

Under section 101(7A) of the 1972 Act, as amended by paragraph 12 of Schedule 9 to the Transport Act 1981, a person whose licence had been endorsed was entitled to apply for a new licence after a period of 11 years in the case of a drink driving offence.

Section 4 of the 1974 Act provided in effect that if the plaintiff's conviction was spent by September 5, 1991 he was entitled in law to give the answer he did and could suffer no adverse consequences from having done so.

Section 5 set out the rehabilitation period, which depended on the sentence passed. Where more than one sentence was imposed, the rehabilitation period applicable was the longest of those periods: see section 5(2). For the fine, the rehabilitation period was five years; for the 21-month disqualification, the period was 21 months.

It was necessary to decide the point, his Lordship would hold that an order for endorsement was a "sentence" within section 1(3) of the 1974 Act. It was an order by the court in respect of a conviction. The fact that it was an "order" appeared from section 101(7) of the 1972 Act.

It was submitted by the defen-

dants, and the judge had held that an order for endorsement was an order imposing a "disability, prohibition or other penalty" within section 5(6) of the 1974 Act.

If the subsection was applicable then the rehabilitation period was 11 years by reason of the provision in respect of drink driving offences to that effect.

The judge had considered that the endorsement was a prohibition and a disability because it was a prohibition against getting a clean licence and it was a disability because a person with an endorsement was in a worse position than a person without one.

In one sense, of course, any order of the court disabled and prohibited a person from doing things inconsistent with it. But his Lordship did not believe that the right interpretation of the statute was as wide as that.

The words "disqualification, disability, prohibition" were aimed at an order restricting a person from carrying on some activity in life for a limited period; it did not contemplate a person carrying on the activity of applying for a clean licence.

The question whether an order for endorsement was a "penalty" was more difficult.

Where endorsement was obliga-

Act it was not in that sense a penalty. It was a record which courts were obliged to make.

The result which followed if endorsement was a penalty was surprising. If the period of rehabilitation when there was an endorsement was 11 years, rehabilitation would occur later than for a person sent to prison for six to 30 months, when the rehabilitation period was 10 years.

Bell v Ingham [1969] 1 Q.B. 563 was authority that in some contexts endorsement was a penalty. Mr Justice Ashworth had said that endorsement was an unpleasant consequence and in that sense was a penalty. But on another view it was not currently a penalty because it did not impose any live sanction.

In view of the consequences flowing from holding that endorsement was a penalty within section 5(6) of the 1974 Act, which made little sense, his Lordship concluded that Parliament did not intend "penalty" to be used in the wider sense within the Act.

Lord Justice Pill delivered a concurring judgment and Lord Justice Mummery delivered a dissenting judgment.

Solicitors: Lawrence Graham for Cooke & Haddock, Worthing; Badhams Thompson.

Bennett and Others v Guardian Newspapers Ltd

Before Lord Justice Evans, Lord Justice Swinton Thomas and Lord Justice Otton
[Reasons January 22]

Events including unjustified suspicion, rumour or complaints alone subsequent to publication of words complained of in an action for libel were irrelevant to the issue of distress flowing from the loss of reputation, resulting from the publication of the alleged libel.

The Court of Appeal held when giving reasons for dismissing on January 21 an appeal by Guardian Newspapers Ltd, defendants in a libel action brought by PC Reynold Bennett, Sgt Robert Walton, PC Bernard Gillan, PC Paul Goscomb and PC Gerald Maga, against an order of Mr Justice French made on January 17 during the trial that they should not be entitled to cross-examine the plaintiffs as to causation of damage or as to credit and that they be required to amend their defence to put causation in issue.

The plaintiffs were serving police officers in 1992 at the time of the newspaper article in which they were not named. Guardian Newspapers had sought to introduce material up to the date of commencement of action.

The Court of Appeal ordered that the reasons were not to be published until after the trial. On February 7 the jury dismissed the plaintiffs' action.

Mr George Carman, QC and Miss Victoria Sharp for Guardian Newspapers Ltd; Mr Thomas Shields, QC and Mr Stephen Suttle for the plaintiffs.

LORD JUSTICE OTTON said that the appeal concerned the issue of damages. It was well established

that where a plaintiff was an individual, one of the most important factors in the assessment of damages was the effect of the libel on the plaintiff's feelings: see *Duncan & Neill on Defamation* (second edition 1983) 18-13.

In *McCune v Associated Newspapers Ltd* [1969] 2 Q.B. 869 Lord Justice Pearson had dealt with the various elements in compensatory damages. Following that principle, a claim for distress arising out of the publication which resulted in loss of reputation had been advanced on behalf of the plaintiffs.

The rule concerning admission of general evidence of bad reputation was stated in *Duncan & Neill* (at 18-17).

In *Dingle v Associated Newspapers Ltd* [1964] AC 371, 396, 412 the House of Lords had held that it was not permissible for defendants to rely in mitigation of damages upon the assertion that the plaintiff's reputation was damaged by defamatory articles other than that complained of: see also *Speidel v Pluto Films Ltd* [1961] AC 1000, 1143.

In *R v Edwards* [1991] 1 W.L.R. 207, 216 the Court of Appeal had to consider the extent to which police officers could be cross-examined to show whether or not they themselves had been guilty of a criminal offence in the course of their duties.

It was well established that a person, who sought to raise a positive case by way of defence was required to do so in the pleadings: see *R v Edwards*, rule 12(6) of the Rules of the Supreme Court.

On the first issue, in his Lordship's judgment, the trial judge was correct to stop the cross-examination. One could draw an analogy with *Dingle v Associated Newspapers* where it was held that

a subsequent publication by other newspapers was irrelevant.

It was appropriate in principle and logic that the subsequent events Mr Carman sought to introduce were equally irrelevant to the issues of the distress which flowed solely from the loss of reputation resulting from the publication of the words complained of.

The judge was equally correct to disallow amendment of the defence which sought to put causation in issue. The pleading of a bare denial, was on its face, a defective pleading if the intention was to raise a positive case of alternative cause of distress. Even if the pleading were not flawed, the trial judge had a discretion to allow the amendment at the particular stage of the trial.

LORD JUSTICE EVANS said that in the absence of any pleaded issue, it was clear that the cross-examination should not be permitted. That was in accordance with the general principle that a witness could not be cross-examined as to credit on the basis of rumour or suspicion or even complaint alone: see *R v Edwards*. That was in a criminal context where the court's discretion was involved.

But in his Lordship's judgment, the general principle held true in a libel action where no attempt was made to justify the suspicion that was raised.

Lord Justice Swinton Thomas delivered a concurring judgment.

Solicitors: Oslwang, Russell Jones Walker.

Correction

In *R v Hounslow LBC, Ex parte R* (The Times February 25) the solicitors for the applicant were Vickers & Co, Wileston.

Creditor's vote valid despite exclusion attempt

In re Debtors (Nos 400 and 401 of 1996)

Before Mr Justice Rimer
[Judgment February 13]

A creditor who should have been given notice of a meeting to consider a debtor's proposals for a voluntary arrangement with his creditors under section 257 of the Insolvency Act 1986 and was not given such notice but who learnt about the meeting independently could validly vote at the meeting.

Mr Justice Rimer so held in the Chancery Division on appeals by two debtors pursuant to rule 5.17(8) of the Insolvency Rules (SI 1986 No 1925) from the decision of the chairman of two meetings convened to consider the debtors' proposals for individual voluntary arrangements with their creditors to allow Colonial Mutual Group (UK Holdings) Ltd to vote at the meetings.

Rule 5.17 provides: "(1) Subject as follows, every creditor who was given notice of the creditors' meeting is entitled to vote at the meeting or any adjournment of it."

Mr Gerald M. Jones for the debtors, Mr Richard Adkins, QC and Mr Andreas Gledhill for Colonial.

MR JUSTICE RIMER said that the debtors were indebted to one of their creditors, Colonial, in the sum of £114,698.52. The debtors apparently believed that they had a cross-claim against Colonial for damages of between £50,000 and £15 million.

The debtors proposed an individual voluntary arrangement with their creditors but wished to

exclude Colonial from it. They wanted to keep it in the dark as to what was going on, so as to minimise any risk that it might intervene and use its vote as a creditor to prevent the arrangements being approved.

The debtors appealed against the chairman's decision allowing Colonial to vote. They claimed: (a) it was perfectly proper for the chairman not to give notice to Colonial of the creditors' meetings as its debt was disputed by the debtors and (b) if it was not Colonial was anyway not entitled to vote at the meetings because it was not given notice of them by the nominee.

His Lordship was unpersuaded that the debtors' claim for damages was arguable but was prepared to assume for present purposes that it was.

On (a), his Lordship found that on the facts, the argument based on the existence of an alleged equitable set-off could not help the debtors. He held that rule 5.12(2) required the nominee to give notice of the section 257 meetings to Colonial and that there was no justification for his omission to do so.

On (b), Mr Jones argued that even if the nominee was not giving Colonial notice of the meetings, the effect of his failure to do so was to deprive it of any right to vote at them.

His Lordship held, first, that it could not be said that Colonial was a creditor who was given notice of the meeting within rule 5.17. The nominee and the debtors did all in their power to ensure that notice was not given to it and it was only

because of Rosenblatt's resourcefulness that Colonial found out about it.

He did not consider that a creditor who successfully searched the county court file for the date of a section 257 meeting could be held to have been deliberately kept in the dark could fairly claim that he was given notice of it.

Furthermore, notice given by a third party would not be within the section. The wording of rule 5.17, properly construed, meant "every creditor who was given notice of the creditors' meeting by the nominee" rather than "every creditor with notice (how so ever obtained) of the creditors' meeting".

His Lordship accepted Mr Adkins' argument that rule 5.17(1) did not implicitly also provide that other creditors who obtained notice of the meeting by another route might not attend the meeting and claim a right to vote at it.

The scheme of Part VIII of the 1986 Act and the rules was that individual voluntary arrangements were intended to be put before all the debtors' creditors and that notice of a section 257 meeting should be sent by the nominee to all of them.

It was consistent with that that all such creditors should be entitled to attend and vote at a section 257 meeting of which they had actual notice, regardless of whether they were given notice by the nominee in accordance with the rules.

It made little sense of the legislation to interpret it as intended to achieve the result that a

creditor who should have been given notice of such a meeting by the nominee, but was not, should be denied the right to vote at it if he was fortunate enough to have obtained sufficient notice of it by another route.

In his Lordship's judgment, Colonial was entitled to vote at the meetings and its votes were validly cast.

Solicitors: Edmonson, Hall, Newmarket; Rosenblatt.

Human Rights Law Report

Court martial not a fair hearing

Findlay v United Kingdom
(Case No 11019/95/616/700)

Before R. Ryssdal, President, and Judges J. De Meyer, E. Palm, A. N. Lorenz, J. M. Morenilla, Sir John Freeland, D. Gotchev, P. Jambrek and K. Jungwiler.

Registrar P. J. Mahoney
[Judgment February 25]

A trial by court martial governed by the procedure laid down in the Army Act 1955 did not constitute a fair hearing by an independent tribunal as guaranteed by article 6.1 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European Court of Human Rights so held when finding unanimously that there had been a violation in the case of Alexander Findlay.

Article 6.1 provides: "In the determination of... any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing... by an independent and impartial tribunal..."

Mr Findlay was born in 1961 and lived in Windsor. He joined the British Army in 1980 and was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1982. He was discharged in October or November 1992. During the Falklands campaign in 1982 he witnessed the death and mutilation of several of his friends and was himself injured. Subsequently, he suffered psychiatric problems which were not, however, diagnosed until 1990.

On July 29, 1990, after a heavy drinking session, he held members of his unit at gunpoint, threatening to kill himself and some of them. After having fired two shots into the television set, he surrendered the pistol and was subsequently

arrested. Psychiatric reports indicated that the incident had resulted from post traumatic stress disorder.

The convening officer, a major general, took the decision to charge Mr Findlay with six civilian and ten military offences relating to that incident.

The convening officer was responsible for appointing the prosecuting officer and members of the court martial. That consisted of a president and four other members, all of whom were army officers of ranks subordinate to that of the convening officer and serving in units commanded by him. The president was himself on the convening officer's staff. A judge advocate, a barrister, whose role was to provide legal advice, was appointed by the Judge Advocate General's Office.

On November 11, 1991, the applicant appeared before the court martial and pleaded guilty to seven of the charges. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment, deemed to the rank of sergeant and was discharged from the army. No reasons were provided for that decision.

The applicant's petitions to the confirming officer, who was the same person as the convening officer, and to the first and second reviewing authorities for a reduction in sentence were refused. The reviewing authorities were both non-legally qualified army officers advised by the Judge Advocate General's Office.

His application to the Divisional Court of the High Court for leave to challenge by judicial review the findings of the court martial was refused.

At 22.00 on the trial judge told the jury, which had been unable to reach a unanimous verdict, that he could accept a majority verdict provided it was not less than 10-2.

After the judge had given the direction to the jury, they returned at 4.05pm with a 10-2 verdict of guilty. The applicant was sentenced to six years imprisonment.

Mr Gregory's applications to the Court of Appeal for leave to appeal against conviction were refused. The application to the European Commission of Human Rights, which was lodged on April 5, 1995.

In its report of October 18, 1995 on the merits of the application, the Commission found that there had been no violation of article 6.1 of the Convention (eight votes to three) and that no separate issue arose under article 14 taken together with article 6 (unanimously).

In its judgment, the European Court of Human Rights held as follows:

I Article 6.1
In line with its consistent case law the Court stressed that the impartiality of a tribunal including a jury had to be determined on the basis of both a subjective and an objective test.

Since there was no proof of actual or subjective bias on the part of one or more jurors and evidence of such could not be adduced by questioning the jurors about the origin and nature of the allegations in the note on account of the rule in English law governing the secrecy of jury deliberations, the Court considered that the appropriate starting point was to examine whether in the circumstances the trial judge had done all that could be required of him under article 6.1 to dispel any objectively justified doubts about the jury's impartiality.

On that understanding the Court had particular regard to the

steps taken by the judge on receipt of the note from the jury.

The Court observed that the judge had not dismissed the allegation outright but had sought the views of prosecution and defence counsel on a suitable reaction to it.

He had concluded in the light of the options available to him at that stage of the trial that the matter could best be dealt with by reconvening the jury and issuing a firm redirection in open court.

As an experienced judge having observed the jury throughout the trial he had no doubt been aware of the possibility of discharging the jury or asking them in open court whether they were capable of continuing and returning a verdict on the evidence alone.

Defence counsel had not in fact pressed for either of those courses of action and it could thus be reasonably inferred that he himself had not considered that either had been warranted in the circumstances.

At the most, defence counsel would appear to have asked the judge to investigate the circumstances which had motivated the writing of the note. However, any such investigation would have been impossible on account of the above-mentioned rules on the secrecy of jury deliberations.

The redirection itself had been forceful, detailed and emphatically worded with particular emphasis on the jury members' sworn duty to try the case on the evidence alone to the exclusion of any thoughts of prejudice of any kind.

The nature of the redirection, coupled with the fact that no further allegations of racial bias were made, led the Court to conclude that the trial judge had taken sufficient steps to ensure the impartiality of the jury and to dispel any objective doubts there might have been about that.

While the Court noted that the guarantee of a fair trial might in certain circumstances require a judge to discharge a jury, it considered that in circumstances such as those in the instant case a carefully worded redirection might be sufficient for the purposes of article 6.1 of the Convention.

There had therefore been no violation. Judge Fogh dissenting. **II Article 14** in conjunction with article 6.1

The Court considered that the applicant's complaint did not give rise to any separate issue and that therefore there had been no violation under this head.

subordinate in rank to the convening officer. Many of them, including the president, were directly or ultimately under his chain of command.

Furthermore, he also acted as confirming officer. Thus, the decision of the court martial was not effective until ratified by him and he had the power to vary the sentence it had imposed.

That was contrary to the well established principle that a tribunal should have the power to make a binding decision, which could not be altered by a non-judicial authority.

In "these" circumstances, the Court considered that Mr Findlay's doubts about the tribunal's independence and impartiality were objectively justified and that there had been a violation of article 6.1.

II Article 50
Mr Findlay claimed that he had lost £440,200 wages and pension from the army as a result of his conviction. In addition, he asked for £50,000 in compensation for the distress and suffering caused by the trial and the eight months he had spent in prison. He also asked that his conviction be quashed.

The Court affirmed that it could not speculate as to what the outcome of the court martial proceedings might have been had the violation of the Convention not occurred. In consequence, it did not award any compensation. Furthermore, it had no jurisdiction to quash convictions pronounced by national courts.

It did, however, award in full the legal costs of £23,956.25 claimed by Mr Findlay.

Judge's direction sufficient to counter bias

Gregory v United Kingdom
(Case No 111/95/617/707)

Before R. Ryssdal, President, and Judges J. De Meyer, F. Gieseler, J. M. Morenilla, Sir John Freeland and A. B. Baksa.

Registrar P. J. Mahoney
[Judgment February 25]

A judge's decision to deal with an allegation of racial bias in a jury trial by a black defendant by means of a redirection rather than a discharge did not constitute an infringement of the right to a fair trial as guaranteed in article 6.1 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European Court of Human Rights so held by a majority, Judge Fogh dissenting, in the case of David Gregory.

Article 6.1 of the Convention provides: "In the determination of... any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair... hearing... by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law."

The applicant, who was black, was born in 1966 and lived in Manchester. On November 26 to 28 1991 he was tried for robbery before a jury at Manchester Crown Court. The jury retired at 10.46am on November 28 to consider their verdict but returned at 12.28pm and handed a note to the trial judge which stated: "Jury showing racial overtones. One member to be excused."

In the absence of the jury, the trial judge consulted counsel for the prosecution and defence about a suitable response to the note. Counsel for the defence recommended that he asked the judge to discharge the jury in the circumstances.

In the judge's recollection, however, both counsel agreed to the course of action he proposed, namely to issue a redirection to the jury. The jury were recalled and the trial judge instructed them to put out of their minds any thoughts of prejudice of whatever

kind and to consider the case on the evidence alone.

At 22.00 on the trial judge told the jury, which had been unable to reach a unanimous verdict, that he could accept a majority verdict provided it was not less than 10-2.

After the judge had given the direction to the jury, they returned at 4.05pm with a 10-2 verdict of guilty. The applicant was sentenced to six years imprisonment.

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I Article 6.1
In line with its consistent case law the Court stressed that the impartiality of a tribunal including a jury had to be determined on the basis of both a subjective and an objective test.

Since there was no proof of actual or subjective bias on the part of one or more jurors and evidence of such could not be adduced by questioning the jurors about the origin and nature of the allegations in the note on account of the rule in English law governing the secrecy of jury deliberations, the Court considered that the appropriate starting point was to examine whether in the circumstances the trial judge had done all that could be required of him under article 6.1 to dispel any objectively justified doubts about the jury's impartiality.

On that understanding the Court had particular regard to the

steps taken by the judge on receipt of the note from the jury.

The Court observed that the judge had not dismissed the allegation outright but had sought the views of prosecution and defence counsel on a suitable reaction to it.

He had concluded in the light of the options available to him at that stage of the trial that the matter could best be dealt with by reconvening the jury and issuing a firm redirection in open court.

As an experienced judge having observed the jury throughout the trial he had no doubt been aware of the possibility of discharging the jury or asking them in open court whether they were capable of continuing and returning a verdict on the evidence alone.

Defence counsel had not in fact pressed for either of those courses of action and it could thus be reasonably inferred that he himself had not considered that either had been warranted in the circumstances.

At the most, defence counsel would appear to have asked the judge to investigate the circumstances which had motivated the writing of the note. However, any such investigation would have been impossible on account of the above-mentioned rules on the secrecy of jury deliberations.

The redirection itself had been forceful, detailed and emphatically worded with particular emphasis on the jury members' sworn duty to try the case on the evidence alone to the exclusion of any thoughts of prejudice of any kind.

The nature of the redirection, coupled with the fact that no further allegations of racial bias were made, led the Court to conclude that the trial judge had taken sufficient steps to ensure the impartiality of the jury and to dispel any objective doubts there might have been about that.

While the Court noted that the guarantee of a fair trial might in certain circumstances require a judge to discharge a jury, it considered that in circumstances such as those in the instant case a carefully worded redirection might be sufficient for the purposes of article 6.1 of the Convention.

There had therefore been no violation. Judge Fogh dissenting. **II Article 14** in conjunction with article 6.1

The Court considered that the applicant's complaint did not give rise to any separate issue and that therefore there had been no violation under this head.

EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION THE TIMES



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Now is your chance to get in pole position for The Times and the Marlboro World Championship Team 1997 Formula One season which starts in Melbourne on Sunday March 9. For the chance to win a share of our £40,000 Fantasy Formula One jackpot just choose a team of six racing drivers and six constructors from the four groups listed in the panel, below. Entry phone lines are open from now until noon on Thursday March 6. Your name will go into a pre-season draw for the chance to win a

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RACING: MAGUIRE'S MISHAP GIVES FORMER CHAMPION STRONG BOOK OF RIDES FOR FESTIVAL

Dunwoody called up by Nicholson

By Julian Muscat

THE odds about Richard Dunwoody topping the riding charts at Cheltenham will have been sharpened after his summons to replace the injured Adrian Maguire on three prizes rides for the David Nicholson stable.

Nicholson yesterday secured Dunwoody's services for Viking Flagship in the Queen Mother Champion Chase, Mulligan in the Arkle Trophy and either Reel or Sandmartin in the Champion Hurdle. The former champion jockey will also partner the Nicholson-trained Certainly Strong in the Grand Annual Challenge Cup Chase.

Name: RECTORY GARDEN (3.10 Ludlow)
Next best: Cariboo Gold (3.00 Huntingdon)

Dunwoody fills the breach created by Maguire's cruel injury in a fall at Leicester on Tuesday. A fracture to Maguire's right arm has not only forced him out of the Festival for the third consecutive year, but will cause him to miss the rest of the season.

Dunwoody is expected to school his big race mounts at Nicholson's Jackdaws Castle complex on Sunday week, just 48 hours before the curtain rises on Cheltenham's three-day fixture.

"I have cleared the arrangements with all the owners concerned," Nicholson said yesterday. "I have yet to make firm plans for L'Opera (Triumph Hurdle) or Barton Bank (Gold



Viking Flagship is one of the attractive rides Dunwoody will take over from Maguire at the Cheltenham Festival

Cup) but expect to do so shortly. Richard Johnson, Adrian's deputy here, can also be expected to have about 12 rides for us."

Dunwoody, however, will not be aboard L'Opera, a fluent winner under Maguire at Kempton five days ago. He is already engaged in the Triumph Hurdle for Shooting Light, whom he rode to victory at Cheltenham last month.

Both Viking Flagship and Mulligan have excellent prospects in their respective races. Dunwoody has partnered Viking Flagship, a dual winner of the Champion Chase, on numerous occasions, most recently at Cheltenham ten months ago. But he has never before ridden Mulligan, a warm favourite for the two-mile novices' championship over fences.

Whatever his mount in the Champion Hurdle, Dunwoody is assured of an attractive ride. Nicholson is expected to decide on Sandmartin's participation on Sunday week. Should Sandmartin be kept among his fellow novices, Dunwoody will be aboard Reel, who, on his first outing for 23 months, chased home Collier Bay, the reigning champion

hurdler, at Towcester earlier this month. But Dunwoody must first prove his own fitness in respect of the hairline fracture to the breastbone he suffered in a tumble at Kempton on Saturday. The signs are encouraging. His agent, Robert Parsons, reported a marked improvement in Dunwoody's condition since the jockey left hospital on Monday.

"We are planning for a return to action a week on Friday," Parsons said. "I won't be overhauling him. He will ride in two or three races at Sandown and we will take it from there. Richard does not usually ride on the Monday before Cheltenham and I expect he will follow the pattern this year."

The recent experiences of Dunwoody and Maguire graphically illustrate how fine is the line beneath which disaster lurks. Maguire rode five winners on the day Dunwoody suffered his injury at Kempton. Now, with Dunwoody seemingly assured of his place at Cheltenham, it is Maguire who misses the

The meeting scheduled for Plumpton tomorrow survived after drying winds came to the track's rescue. Monday's fixture at the course was lost.

pinnacle of the National Hunt season.

In other Cheltenham developments, Noel Chance, who trains the Gold Cup hope, Mr. McCoy, maintained that Tony McCoy would be aboard the chestnut two weeks today. "There has never been any doubt about it in my mind," Chance said yesterday.

Chance's comments are instructive because McCoy has allied himself to Martin Pipe since he left the Paul Nicholls stable last month. Pipe has Cyborg in line for the Gold Cup, but Chance's confirmation of McCoy's riding plans suggests the Royal Sun Alliance Chase option looms large on Cyborg's agenda.

HUNTINGDON

THUNDERER
2.00 Tossingup, 2.30 Granville, 3.00 Cariboo Gold, 3.30 SATCOTTON (nap), 4.00 After Mole, 4.30 Broomfield, 5.00 Out of the Mist.
Carl Evans: 2.30 Tossingup, 4.30 Broad Steane.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT

2.00 COLENDEN SELLING HURDLE

(2.07.25, 2m 110yd) (16 runners)
1-56: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
3-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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14-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
15-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
16-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

2.30 COLMISTON HUNTERS CHASE

(2.31.24, 3m) (8)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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7-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
8-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

3.00 CHAWSTON HANDICAP CHASE

(3.13.17, 3m) (7)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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6-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
7-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: 1. 22 winners from 65 runners, 23.5%
2. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%
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99. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%
100. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%

GOING: STANDARD

DRAW: 5F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST

2.25 SUNTER APPRENTICES CLAIMING STAKES

(3-0-0, 2.25.07, 1m 40) (6 runners)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
3-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
4-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
5-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
6-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

2.55 CHATTANOOGA HANDICAP (CS.339, 50) (7)

1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
3-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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6-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
7-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

3.25 H.E.A.T. HANDICAP (CS.791, 70) (9)

1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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9-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

3.30 LEVY BOARD NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES

HURDLE (CS.600, 3m 20) (15)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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14-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
15-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

4.00 WYBOSTON NOVICES CHASE

(CS.028, 2m 40 110yd) (6)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
3-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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6-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

4.30 LANGFORD END NOVICES HUNTERS CHASE

(Amateur, £1,262, 3m) (15)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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14-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
15-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

5.00 WILDEN HANDICAP HURDLE

(CS.635, 3m 20) (14)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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14-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

3.55 ATLANTA MARDEN STAKES

(3-0-0, CS.528, 1m 20) (6)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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4.25 H.E.A.T. CONTRACTORS HANDICAP

(CS.384, 2m) (7)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
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4.55 VICKSBURG HANDICAP

(CS.118, 1m) (3)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
3-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: 1. 22 winners from 65 runners, 23.5%
2. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%
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92. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%
93. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%
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97. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%
98. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%
99. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%
100. 11 winners from 34 runners, 32.3%

LUDLOW

THUNDERER
2.10 Midnight Legend, 2.40 Tellicherry, 3.10 Romya Creek, 3.40 Better Bythe Glass, 4.10 Inch Malt, 4.40 Eranak, 5.10 Benvenuto.
Carl Evans: 4.10 Inch Malt.

GOING: GOOD TOTE JACKPOT MEETING

2.10 CORVEDALE NOVICES HURDLE

(CS.654, 2m) (18 runners)
1-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
2-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
3-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
4-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
5-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
6-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
7-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
8-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
9-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
10-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
11-48: HUNTINGDON (10.5) (J. J. Evans) 9-12-10
12-48: HUN

Vegetable clairvoyance and cats in bondage

A contentious statements go, the opening to last night's *Modern Times* Manage-tout took the biscuit: in fact it made off with several bounties and a gypsy cream. "If you look hard enough at a vegetable," it said, "you can catch a glimpse of all the people who've come into contact with it." Really? Is that true? In supermarkets throughout the land, watch out today for people meditating in silence at the veg counter, frowning closely through cellophane at imported spuds. Tills will fall silent. Finally, from the freezer department, a cry will go up. "The seal I can hear the seal!" And a man will wave a box of fish fingers aloft in triumph.

Mark Phillips, the producer of *Manage-tout*, was obviously not to generalise from his own experience, but this delightful film certainly demonstrated that if a documentary film-maker with an eye for colour looked long enough

at a vegetable, the result was extremely worthwhile. Interact with a ghoulish dinner party in England (at which manage-tout was consumed and commercial exploitation discussed in a tedious, unenlightened manner), essentially his subject was a visit from the Tescos produce manager to a gloriously beautiful pea-farm in Zimbabwe, where Tescos is held in high regard and where, in fact, Tescos's continued approval spells survival or demise. If you ever saw that troubling old advert for Del Monte tinned fruit — "The man from Del Monte says yes!" — it was like that, only longer.

In English supermarkets, customers leant on trolleys and depressingly denied all knowledge of the mangrove's origins. "China," they barked, wildly, "asked to guess the whereabouts of Zimbabwe, they were equally dumb. "Africa" was a lucky hit, but spilt by "Is it the capital?" Back on the

pea-farm, the planting manager drew a map in the sand showing Africa and Zimbabwe, and then explained that the best place in the world to visit was Tescos — a "quite magnificent country" somewhere to the north. Such reverence for Tescos was, of course, both comical and entirely appropriate. Meanwhile Tescos reaped so many free names that it was hard to tell the director, sitting at home in mooning agitation, was probably the first person ever literally to burst from excitement while watching BBC2.

Exploitation was the issue, but *Manage-tout* was not a dour polemical film: it left the viewers some space to draw their own depressing conclusions about profit margins and away from the pea-farm was beguiling. A pea-green boat always sounded rather dull in *The Owl and the Pussycat*, but pea-green turns out

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

to be the most vivid of hues. See it under solid blue skies, with the red flag of Tescos fluttering on a white pole, with Zimbabwean children singing choral harmonies to "Farewell, good friend! Farewell, Tescos!" and, well, the colour likes to turn out to be what it is after all.

Last night's *Counterblast* (BBC2) was likewise about exploitation, but was more serious in tone. Sue Smith, who runs an

animal sanctuary, argued so convincingly against pet-keeping that, at the end, when I happened to notice the innocuous name-tag on my cat Paddy's collar, I recoiled in guilt. A collar on an animal? A tag tied to her body, asserting ownership? This was terrible. "Paddy is your slave name!" I confessed to her, with lip a-quiver. "You are kept here under a kind of house arrest!" And she rubbed her head on the back of my leg, purring — like a Zimbabwean pea-farmer saying thank you, thank you, thank you, dear, dear friend, and making me feel a great deal worse.

This *Counterblast* was not about the cruelty of bad people to their animals, you see; it was about freedom being an animal right which, like all nice, loving, thoughtlessly distressing, kept wanting to interject that cats were the exception, because (unlike dogs) they gladly volunteered for a life indoors, but could I get a word in?

No, Ms Smith and her selected witnesses took full account of people's affection for their animals, but still gently informed them that their love was selfish and must be relinquished. It was a real bummer for people who enjoy the game called "That's My Hamster's Bottom" on *Pets Win Prizes*. I can tell you.

Over on BBC1, Lucy Gannon's open-prison drama *Insiders* brought us a gripping episode two, in which self-control turned out to be too difficult for a prisoner called Childs (he was finally taken back to the nick). The main theme of *Insiders* is mutual respect; it's about people with all the power (in this case, prison officers) trying not to exercise it — and as such, of course, is astonishingly unrealistic yet rather sweet. The climax last night found workshop manager Annie (Julia Ford) facing the

runaway Childs in the rain, when he stopped her car. Very dramatic, it was, but somehow not the least bit threatening. And what a shame that a similar scene took place in a recent episode of *The Governor*.

I vowed not to return to Channel 4's *Foran* TV, but on this momentous night of pet-guilt, it was a matter of some urgency to see the advertised cat-language item. If I could speak Cat, you see, I could interrogate my bond slaves. However, according to the self-styled cat-language expert Alexandra Sellers, *Brrow, miaow, ma, brrow, miaow* turns out to mean either "Would you like cream?" or "Would milk be sufficient?" — questions which define this particular master-slave relationship rather neatly, I thought. "You can't give an order to a cat (in Cat)," added Ms Sellers, seriously. "It is grammatically impossible." Good grief. And it had taken her seven years to establish that.

BBC1

- 6.00am BBC Breakfast (73379)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (7837)
- 9.00am Breakfast News Extra (7838263)
- 9.20am Style Challenge (1098802)
- 9.45am Killy (8363466)
- 10.30am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (13737)
- 11.00am News (7834969)
- 11.05am The Really Useful Show (3913718)
- 11.35am Change That (544447)
- 12.00am News (7834195)
- 12.05pm The Alphabet Game (5527263)
- 12.30am Going for 9 Song (7818398)
- 12.55am The Weather Show (3492244)
- 1.00am News (781824)
- 1.30am Regional News (9859027)
- 1.40am Neighbours (78245718)
- 2.05am Quince (873399)
- 2.50am As Time Goes By (7834782)
- 3.20am Noble Castles (8755981)
- 3.30am Playdays (1237008) 3.50am Wham! Bam! Strawberry Jam! (7025021) 4.05am Casper Classics (2009404) 4.10am Rugsrats (9324282) 4.35am The Really Wild Show (9251716) 5.00am The Big Bang (782244) 5.10am George Hill (1072718)
- 5.35am Neighbours (781824)
- 6.00am News (781824)
- 6.30am Newsroom South East (469)
- 7.00am Weatherlog (781824)
- 7.30am EastEnders: Ricky finds himself in a spot of bother, and only Phil is in any position to help him out. Ruth confronts Martin over the whereabouts of some missing money (781824)
- 8.00am Wildlife on One: insight into how the Lancel volcano in East Africa dominates all life in the surrounding area (781824)
- 8.30am A Perfect State: A new comedy series about a local community's recently discovered status following an oversight in the Domesday Book. With Gwen Taylor, David Nicholls, Richard Hope and Alan David (781824)
- 9.00am Political Broadcast: By the Liberal Democrats (148331)
- 9.05am News (781824)
- 9.35am Chalk: Eric is interviewed for the job of headmaster, but soon begins to wonder just how far he'll have to go to get it (781824)
- 10.05am The X-Files: Mulder and Scully are called in to investigate the brutal murder of an overweight woman who died on a blind date arranged via the Internet (781824)
- 10.50am Question Time: Transport Secretary Sir George Young, Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam, leader of the Scottish National Party Alex Salmond and the Liberal Democrats' Agriculture spokesman Paul Tyler answer questions posed by audience members in Southampton (781824)
- 11.50am The Mrs Merton Show: With guests film director Michael Winner and Teresa Gorman MP (781824)
- 12.20am By-Election: Special South: David Dimbleby and Peter Snow present coverage of the result and its implications (54822)
- 2.05am Weather (5910935)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes, which allow you to programme your video recorder to record a programme automatically with a VideoPlus+ handset. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ is a trademark of Gemstar Development Ltd.

BBC2

- 6.00am Open University: Body Plans (5222621) 6.25am Insect Diversity (5241756) 6.50am Molluscs, Mechanisms and Minds (5201802) 7.15am News (5205008) 7.30am Captain Cawing and the Teen Angels (1294802) 7.55am Peter (7834447) 8.20am Whishing (7250069) 8.35am The Record (7014378) 9.00am The Science Collection (1018008) 9.25am Job Bank (8544802) 9.40am Megamaths (2573465) 10.00am Playdays (30088) 10.30am Storytime (11011) 10.55am The Experiment (4917832) 11.05am Space Ark (5220534) 11.15am Living Memory (246756) 11.25am Landmarks (5831737) 11.55am Techno (1284331) 12.15pm Quiz Minutes Plus (1820814) 12.30am Working Lunch (22973) 1.00am Lifeschool (2415454) 1.25am Isabel (1522362) 1.45am Numberline (9836176) 2.00am Whishing (3326214) 2.10am Everyone's Got One (781244) 3.00am News (781824) 3.05am Westminster 3.55am News (781824) 4.00am Today's the Day (521) 4.30am Ready, Steady, Cook (805) 5.00am The Heritage (781824) 5.55am Turning Points (781718) 6.00am Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (781824) 6.45am Quantum Leap (781824) 7.30am First Sight: Boating Clever Harry Borsu reports on an experiment giving a chance to young people deemed out of control (534) 7.55am Surely Some Mistake? (EAST: Matter of Fact MIDLANDS: Midlands Report NORTH/NORTH-EAST/NORTH WEST/SOUTH WEST: Close Up SOUTH: Southern Eye) (781824) 8.00am Surely Some Mistake? (EAST: Matter of Fact MIDLANDS: Midlands Report NORTH/NORTH-EAST/NORTH WEST/SOUTH WEST: Close Up SOUTH: Southern Eye) (781824) 8.30am Top Gear: Tiff Needell puts the Mando and Vectra through their paces (781824) 9.00am Third Rock from the Sun: Dr. Albright's joy at receiving a prestigious award is dampened by having to drive to the ceremony in a snowmobile (781824) 9.25am Horizon: Psychodell's Science Scientists' efforts to make research into the effects of psychodell drugs respectable. (781824) 10.15am Before I Die: Eileen Lindsay talks about living with cancer (18244) 10.25am Party Political Broadcast: By the Liberal Democrats (18244) 10.30am Newsnight (781824) 11.15am Late Review (781824) 12.00am Mickey Film (51454) 12.30am Learning Zone: Open University: Athens (52263) 1.00am The Englishman (54709) 1.30am Cultures of the Walkman (88888) 2.00am Effective Communication (70225) 4.00am Languages: Suenos - World Spanish (23119) 5.00am The Small Business Programme (74041)

CHOICE

Surely Some Mistake?
BBC2, 8.00pm (Wales, 7.30pm; not Scotland or Northern Ireland)
Tonight's business bloomers belong to two very different captains of industry, united only in their willingness to recall their less than finest hours. Sir Peter Parker, who was running British Rail during its ill-fated experiment with the Advanced Passenger Train, is not his fault that the famous tilting mechanism left passengers feeling queasy or that this brilliant piece of high technology broke down on its inaugural run. But it was his decision to launch the train when clearly it was not ready. Today it lies in a clearing, hired out for children's parties. The other red face belongs to the entrepreneur Frank Warren. His London Arena in Docklands attracted big names from Sinatra to Pavarotti, but was scuppered by its inaccessibility. An entertaining series is enhanced by splendid cartoons from Trog.

Shop Till You Drop

Channel 4, 8.00pm
A trip to the supermarket, you may think, is simply a matter of loading the trolley basket, writing the cheque and heading it back to the car park as soon as possible. Not a bit of it, at least according to psychologists, who have studied shopping behaviour. These folk pick up every move and gesture and erect elaborate theories around them. Before the series is more than a few minutes old, it is talking about "purchase interaction analysis". Some of the insights seem specious. Much is made of the way shoppers avoid hitting other people's trolleys. One expert likens it to a ballet. But so what? More usefully, the film looks at the differences in supermarket behaviour between men and women. It is not so much about who wears the trousers as who pushes the trolley.

A Perfect State

BBC1, 8.30pm
A Euro-sceptic sitcom was only a matter of time and *A Perfect State* is such a comprehensive masterpiece that it could have been written by Bill Cash or Teresa Gorman. The actual author is Michael Aitkens, of *Waiting For God*, and the show stars the ever-excellent Gwen Taylor as the forthright deputy mayor of a seaside town, leading the citizens in protest against European Community fishing quotas. But this goes further than a mass of the 1990s, suggesting that Aitkens might have been refreshing himself about a certain Ealing comedy. Certainly, the discovery that the town of Flatby has never been part of Britain, can therefore declare itself an independent state and suckle its own milk. As yet the comparison favours the film, but sitcoms always need time to settle in.

Horizon: Psychodell's Science

BBC2, 9.25pm
Up to the 1960s, when Charles Manson used LSD the worst possible name, serious scientific research suggested that psychodell drugs could help to treat alcoholics and heroin addicts. But after the notorious Manson gang, psychodells were banned and research came to a halt. In the past few years, however, scientists have been fighting to have it restored. Bill Eagle's film reports on the latest state of play, drawing on examples from Brazil and the United States. Anxious not to repeat the mistakes of the 1960s, the scientists are treading carefully. But they are convinced that psychodell drugs can transform our understanding of the relationship between the mind and the brain and have a positive application as treatment and aid to creativity. Peter Wyndham

Brazilian tribal Indians (9.25pm)

9.25am Horizon: Psychodell's Science Scientists' efforts to make research into the effects of psychodell drugs respectable. (781824) 10.15am Before I Die: Eileen Lindsay talks about living with cancer (18244) 10.25am Party Political Broadcast: By the Liberal Democrats (18244) 10.30am Newsnight (781824) 11.15am Late Review (781824) 12.00am Mickey Film (51454) 12.30am Learning Zone: Open University: Athens (52263) 1.00am The Englishman (54709) 1.30am Cultures of the Walkman (88888) 2.00am Effective Communication (70225) 4.00am Languages: Suenos - World Spanish (23119) 5.00am The Small Business Programme (74041)

Cartoon Network/TNT

Cartoon Network: Cartoons from Sun to Spin, then TNT line as follows: 6.00pm South (1987) 6.30pm South (1987) 6.55pm South (1987) 7.20pm South (1987) 7.45pm South (1987) 8.10pm South (1987) 8.35pm South (1987) 8.60pm South (1987) 8.85pm South (1987) 9.10pm South (1987) 9.35pm South (1987) 9.60pm South (1987) 9.85pm South (1987) 10.10pm South (1987) 10.35pm South (1987) 10.60pm South (1987) 10.85pm South (1987) 11.10pm South (1987) 11.35pm South (1987) 11.60pm South (1987) 11.85pm South (1987) 12.10pm South (1987) 12.35pm South (1987) 12.60pm South (1987) 12.85pm South (1987) 1.10pm South (1987) 1.35pm South (1987) 1.60pm South (1987) 1.85pm South (1987) 2.10pm South (1987) 2.35pm South (1987) 2.60pm South (1987) 2.85pm South (1987) 3.10pm South (1987) 3.35pm South (1987) 3.60pm South (1987) 3.85pm South (1987) 4.10pm South (1987) 4.35pm South (1987) 4.60pm South (1987) 4.85pm South (1987) 5.10pm South (1987) 5.35pm South (1987) 5.60pm South (1987) 5.85pm South (1987) 6.10pm South 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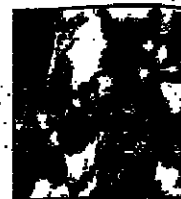
RACING 43

Dunwoody picks up
Maguire's plum
Cheltenham rides

SPORT

CRICKET 46

Twilight zone
gives England
cause for concern



THURSDAY FEBRUARY 27 1997

Englishman who made his name abroad joins Blackburn as manager

Hodgson ends exile with Rovers return

By DAVID MADDOCK

ROY HODGSON, an Englishman who has made his name in exile, finally earned his ticket home yesterday. The son of a Croydon bus driver, Hodgson will leave Internazionale, of Milan, in July to become the manager of Blackburn Rovers.

Hodgson is one of the rare breed of Englishmen who have succeeded abroad. He has transformed himself from what he described as "an inglorious footballer" with clubs such as Ashford Town, Maidstone United and Carlisle Athletic, to the highly respected manager of Switzerland and, latterly, Inter, whom he has taken this season to third place in Serie A, to the semi-finals of the Italian Cup and to the quarter-finals of the Uefa Cup.

Blackburn, recognising the uncommon attraction of an English coach with European experience, moved swiftly last weekend to secure the man who was in fact their first choice when Ray Harford left the club in October. Hodgson joins on a three-year contract, worth, with bonuses, in the region of £750,000 a season.

Hodgson's contract with Inter does not allow his freedom until July and there seems little chance of him hastening the departure, given the anger in Italy over the timing of

Blackburn's announcement yesterday. Inter were due to play the second leg of their Italian Cup semi-final against Napoli last night and officials at the club were dismayed when reporters approached Hodgson, in front of the players, to confirm the news hours before kick-off. "I'm surprised by the speed with which the news has come from England," Massimo Moratti, the club owner, said last night. Blackburn, for their part, were relieved to have secured a big-name manager after the

Shearer warning — 44
Women fail to cash in — 44

farce which surrounded their "appointment" of Sven Goran Eriksson. The Swede, at present with Sampdoria, had agreed, like Hodgson, to join in the summer but, after being courted by Lazio, changed his mind. Everyone, it seemed, knew that Eriksson would not now be coming, except Rovers. Their embarrassment on Friday, when his decision was finally made official, was acute and, with the club's annual general meeting this evening, Robert Coar, the chairman, had to act quickly. He admitted his delight yesterday afternoon. "We believe

we have secured the services of one of the top managers in Europe," he said. "Roy has a great knowledge of the football scene in Europe, and we believe his appointment confirms our intention to be one of the leading clubs in Europe."

Hodgson has briefly managed in England before, when he assumed control of Bristol City in 1982 for four months as a caretaker manager. The club went bust, however, and he was soon to return to Sweden, where he had enjoyed his first management success with Halmstad. With Malmö, he won the Swedish championship five years in a row during the late 1980s and he led Switzerland to the World Cup finals in 1994, before Inter took him to Italy last year.

Hodgson has always, however, had a desire to prove himself in the country where he never succeeded as a player. When Blackburn first approached him in October, before they talked to Eriksson, he was keen to move home, but could not secure his passage. "I am really pleased to be returning to work in England," he said yesterday. "The Premiership is undoubtedly one of the finest leagues in Europe, and I am keen to make an impact back home. I am full of admiration for what Jack Walker has put in place at Blackburn, and I hope I can take the club forward even further. There are the makings of a quality squad and the facilities are first class."

Tony Parkes will remain as caretaker manager, but Hodgson will immediately become active in the transfer market on behalf of his new club, making recommendations for new signings. His first could be Paul Ince, the England international, who will also be returning home from Inter in the summer. Ince has been courted by Arsenal, but he said recently of Hodgson: "If it wasn't for him, I would definitely be back in England already. It was his arrival at Inter that persuaded me to stay on for another year."



Hodgson will be aiming to prove himself in England after enjoying success in Sweden, Switzerland and Italy

CHANGING TIMES



Rob Hughes, whose authoritative reporting over the past four years has helped to establish *The Times* as the newspaper for football, is to take on a new challenge, becoming Chief Sports Writer. He will be replaced as football correspondent by Oliver Holt, widely recognised as the outstanding young talent in sports journalism today.

Hughes, 52, who joined *The Times* in 1993 after 22 years with *The Sunday Times*, will continue to contribute his knowledge and insights on the national game but will now broaden his range. His extensive interests also include equestrianism, National Hunt racing, boxing, tennis, motor racing and rugby. Hughes has covered six World Cup finals and two Olympic Games in a career which has brought him worldwide recognition.



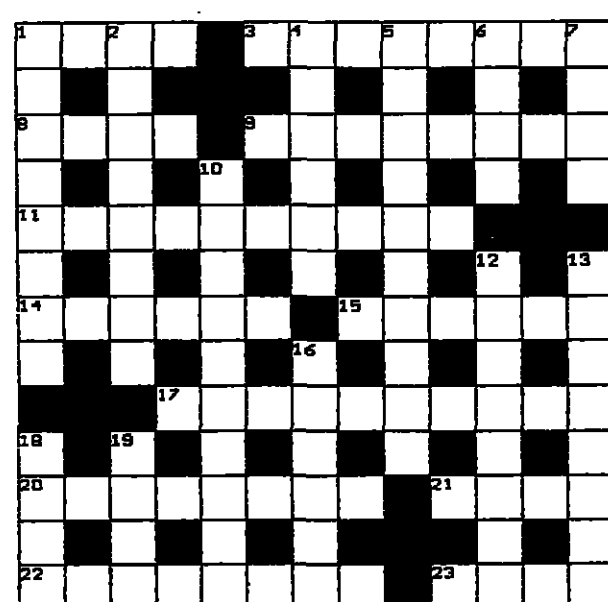
Holt, 30, has been motor racing correspondent of *The Times* for the past four years, a period in which he has covered every aspect of the sport, from the death of Ayrton Senna to Damon Hill's world championship triumph last year.

Holt's career began on the *Daily Post* in Liverpool and he distinguished himself last summer reporting from the England football camp as part of the team covering Euro 96 so successfully for *The Times*.

Holt and Hughes will take up their new positions next month.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1028 in association with
BRITISH MIDLAND



ACROSS
1 Daybreak (4)
3 Israel tribe: Jacob's youngest (8)
8 Cheat of payment (4)
9 Inclination, bent (8)
11 Unpleasantly modern (10)
14 Out of one's mind (8)
15 Predicament: just pass (exam) (6)
17 Prerequisite (4,3,3)
20 (Impractical) perfection seeker (8)
21 Fail to achieve (4)
22 Peripatetic drinking session (3,5)
23 Incline: thin (4)

DOWN
1 Carefree; urbane (8)
2 19C US frontier zone (4,4)
4 Vigour (6)
5 Racing ruling body (6,4)
6 Sound mournful (4)
7 Observe; brief jostling (4)
10 Analgesic (10)
12 Yellow-skin disease (8)
13 In Memoriam poet (8)
16 Up-and-down plaything (3-3)
18 Thin scrap (cloud, material) (4)
19 Plant for flavouring (4)

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Post your entry to Times Two Crossword, PO Box 6884, London E2 8SP to arrive by next Monday. The winners' names and solution will appear on Wednesday.

Name/Address

SOLUTION TO NO 1027

ACROSS: 1 Pitcher 5 Mogul 8 Alter 9 Biggles 10 Time will tell 12 Supine 14 Ashore 17 Not turn a hair 21 Wyoming 22 Benzo 23 Greek 24 Dukedom
DOWN: 1 Practise 2 Toteum 3 Hard-won 4 Rubble 5 Might 6 Galileo 7 Lush 11 Heirloom 13 Provoked 15 Sjabomb 16 Frigid 18 Think 19 Award 20 Twig

Time runs short to save club

By JASON NISSE

TREVOR WATSON, the City solicitor attempting to rescue Bournemouth football club, said last night that he had just ten days to put a package together to save the struggling Nationwide League second division club after the Football League delivered it a potentially lethal blow.

The League said that a plan, put together by Arthur Andersen, the club's receivers, to transfer the assets of Bournemouth into a new company, was against League policy, though it would be happy for Bournemouth to play out the rest of the season.

However, the club, which owes £4.5 million, is not likely to last that long as the Inland Revenue, which is owed £300,000, is planning to have it wound up at a hearing on March 13. Watson said yesterday that he was still trying to get all the creditors to agree to a rescue deal, but admitted that such a plan would have to be put into place within the next ten days.

The League said that, since the 1980s, it has consistently opposed restructurings that pay off some creditors and not others. Under the receivers' deal, Bournemouth would have paid its football debts first and left the others until later.

The League said that it had in the past forced Exeter City and Gillingham to come to a deal with their creditors before approving rescue plans.

BBC announces deal to screen five nations

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

RUGBY union's five nations' championship will continue to be broadcast on terrestrial television by the BBC for the next three years, with the exception of the England games at Twickenham, which fall within the terms of the contract negotiated by the Rugby Football Union (RFU) with BSkyB last year.

In a deal understood to be worth £40 million, the BBC has secured the rights to a minimum of 18 internationals during the next three seasons — the home games played by Scotland, Ireland and Wales during that period. It will also screen 14 other matches organised by those three countries against touring teams and thereby sustain its unbroken record of access to the championship, which remains crucial to its winter schedules.

The sport in Britain has achieved a genuine mixed economy since the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) has also reached an agreement with S4C, the Welsh language programme, and HTV (Wales) that will also be the flagship of ITV's existing agreement to broadcast the 1999 World Cup. Welsh club rugby, and any other internationals that fall outside the BBC agreement, will thus also be screened on terrestrial television in a four-year deal worth £16 million.

One imponderable still remains for viewers in England who do not have access to BSkyB, the satellite company part-owned by News International, owners of *The Times*: the RFU agreement allows for delayed transmission of Twickenham internationals on terrestrial television but

FIVE NATIONS



CHAMPIONSHIP

there is, as yet, no word that Sky has found such a partner, nor whether it will make highlights of the England matches available for a magazine programme, such as *Rugby Special*.

In a further agreement, details of which are expected tomorrow, Sky is expected to confirm that it has won the broadcasting rights for the next five years to the Heineken Cup, the European club competition that has proved so successful in its first two years. That agreement is said to be worth upwards of £30 million, to be divided between the six competing countries (the home unions, France and Italy). Sky also has access to all international rugby played in the three leading southern-hemisphere countries — including the British Lions tour of South Africa this summer.

Under the terms of the peace accord announced last September, after a long summer of strife between England and the three Celtic countries, an independent valuation was due to be made of the five nations' championship, but that has not happened. Instead each country has, in effect, reached its own valuation.

Thus England, under its £87.5 million, five-year agreement with Sky, is worth around £13 million a year, after subtracting the £22.5 million that is earmarked for the clubs.

In contrast, Wales, assuming figures of £4.4 million from the BBC, some £4 million from S4C/HTV and around £1 million as their share of the projected European deal, will earn some £10 million a year from television revenue. Wales turned down an offer of £5 million a year over five years from Sky.

The Welsh have also worked hard to protect live Saturday rugby, by insisting that S4C's live match is played at 6pm, and HTV's on Sunday afternoons. "The cornerstone of the WRU policy... was that matches should be available on a terrestrial channel in order to reach — free of charge — an audience as wide as possible," Vernon Pugh, the WRU chairman, said. "We have to make sure that every child in Wales is able to see his favourite club and player on television, as part of the development of the game."

The clubs themselves will be more concerned with the present, given the fraught finances of nearly every leading club in Britain. "We are obviously delighted that matters are being sorted out but, as clubs, we would like to know how much we will get," Stuart Gallacher, the Llanelli chairman, said. That is the short-term reality for the game's elite in all four home unions.

Call for discipline, page 45

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